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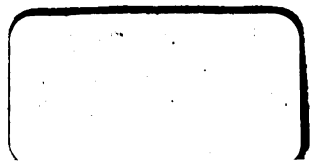
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Theological School
IN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

Received Nov. 19 1878
Gift of E. C. Gould



List of the writings of Rev. ^{Frederick} Douglass

- 1 Lectures on the Doctrines of Christianity - 752. Pp. 31.
- 2 Lectures to Young Men. 1st Ed 1840. 3rd Ed 1852. Baltimore.
- 3 On the Sphere & Duties of Women - 1841. 3rd Ed 1847. ^{delivered in the}
- 4 Lectures on the History of Christianity - 1842. Baltimore.
- 5 Expository Lectures on the Trinity - 1845. Boston.
- 6 Miscellaneous Writings, Collected & revised by the Author, 1845 - Baltimore.
- 7 Memoir of Henry A. Douglass 1845. Published by the Metropolitan Assoc. New York.
- 8 Rectitude of Human Nature - 1850 - Boston.
- 9 Objections to Unitarian Christianity considered. 1853. Boston.
- 10 Christianity, its Essence & Evidence. 1855. Boston.
- 11 Life of Leonard Calvert. Sparks' Amer. Biog. 2nd Series. Vol 9.

Pamphlets.

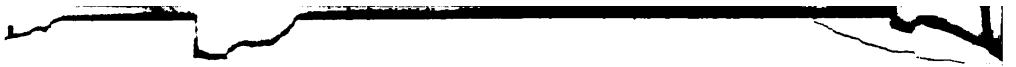
- 1 Sectarianism, both Catholic & Protestant. A Lecture. 1835. Balt.
See Lectures on Doctrines of Christianity. Sect. XII. Pp 295-320 of 2nd Ed. Boston 1848 -
- 2 The Voice of the Pious. A Sermon delivered in the 1st Independent Church of Balt. May 14th 1837 - Pp 16. Baltimore 1837.
Reprinted in "Miscellaneous Writings"
- 3 Commemorative Discourse in 1st Independent Church of Balt.
Sept. 17th 1843 on the occasion of the decease of Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood
Pp 16 - Baltimore.
- 4 Discourse on the Principles involved in the Pusey Controversy.
Pp 24. G. D. Toy. 1844. Balt.
- 5 The End of the World, a discourse suggested by the Miller Doctrine. Pp 32.
1844 - Balt.
Reprinted in "Miscellaneous Writings."
- 6 A Discourse on the Duties of the Citizen Soldier, del.^d July 21st 1844.
Reprinted in "Miscellaneous Writings"
- 7 Church & State, a discourse on the privileges & duties of an American Citizen, del.^d in 1st Independent Church of Balt. Dec 12th 1844.
Reprinted in "Miscellaneous Writings" - Pp 24, 1844 Balt.
- 8 Address del.^d at the Funeral of Henry Payson Dec 28th 1845. Pp 8. 1846. Balt.
- 9 Portion of Unitarianism defined, a discourse at re-opening the 1st Independent Church of Balt. Feb 23rd 1848. Pp 31. 1848. Balt.
- 10 Christian Worship, a discourse at the Dedication of Unity Church, Wheeling, Va. on the 15th of May 1852. Pp 25 - 1852. Ba

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11. *Philosophical Tendencies of the American Mind, An Address before the Union Philosophical Society of Dickinson College. July 7th 1852. Pp. 31.*
1852. Baltimore.
 12. *The Flight of Years, A Discourse delivered in the 1st Independent Church of Baltimore on the 25th Anniversary of his Ordination. (not published.) Pp. 16.*
1853 - Baltimore.
 13. *Origin & Causes of Democracy in America - VIIIth Anniversary Discourse of the Maryland Historical Society Dec. 26th 1853. Pp. 29.* 1853 - Baltimore.
 14. *Vindication of Unitarian Faith, A Discourse delivered April 2^d 1854 at the dedication of the Unitarian Church in Charleston S. C. - Pp. 27.* 1854. Charleston.
 15. *Uses & Abuses of War, A Discourse delivered before the Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company June 5th 1854 Pp. 31.* 1854. Boston.
 16. *The Influence of Literature in a Republic, An Address to the Phrenokosmian Society of Pennsylvania College, at the annual commencement, Sept. 16th 1857. Pp. 20.*
Printed by H. C. Newitt. 1857. Gettysburg.
 17. *A Discourse on Prejudice delivered in the 1st Independent Church, Nov. 18th 1857. Pp. 19.* 1857 - Baltimore.
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18. *A Review of the Life & Writings of Elias Hicks -*
Reprinted from the *Christian Examiner* 1851.
3^d Edition - 1852. Boston.
 19. *Lecture on the Social Influence of Trade.*
Reprinted from Hunt's *Merchants Magazine*.
1841. New York.

Sermon after the death of Dr. Burman.
by Rev E. S. Gannett D. D. 1859. Boston.



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SECTARIANISM

BOTH

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT;

A LECTURE.

BY

Washington

GEORGE W. BURNAP.

"First cast out the beam out of thine own eye."

BALTIMORE:

W. R. LUCAS & J. N. WIGHT.

1885.



ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year one thousand
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JOHN D. TOY, PRINTER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Lecture is one of a series on the Doctrines of Christianity, about to issue from the press. It relates to a subject of great importance in itself, and one which is now strongly agitating the public mind.

With the hope that it may contribute in some degree, to show the true nature of the questions between different sects, which are so freely and so warmly discussed, it is now published in a separate form.

G. W. B.

May, 1835.



LECTURE.

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
Acts, xi. 26.

WHAT is it to be a Christian? What is it necessary for a man to believe, and what is it necessary for him to practise in order to be a Christian, and as such entitled to the name, privileges, and hopes of a Christian? It is my design in this discourse to promote the cause of piety and charity. Of piety, by leading each one to self-examination and earnest self-improvement, and of charity, by giving you the scriptural and reasonable standard for judging of the Christian character and rights of others. I address those, who have a sincere desire to know the truth, and to embrace it, who wish to understand their own rights, and while they maintain them are equally willing to learn and respect the rights of others. I do not address that class of persons, who would give or withhold the Christian name, just as they thought it expedient, in order to produce popular effect,* to raise up one sect and pull down another, to deter the multitude from fair and

* See note A.

impartial examination, by hard names and odious imputations. Such men I do not address, for light, conviction is what they do not want. They already know better than they do. I address those who are earnest inquirers after truth and holiness, those who wish to unite, not scatter the flock of Christ, those who wish to find in the Creeds of different sects, points of resemblance instead of points of difference.

It has been common, we know, for every sect into which the church has been divided, to insist on their own peculiarities as the essentials of Christianity. But if this be allowed what follows? It follows that every other sect, all other sects, who do not hold to the same are not Christians. It unchurches and excommunicates all the rest of Christendom. If the Catholic insists that every article of his Creed is essential to Christianity and indispensable to salvation, then it will follow that all Protestants are not Christians. They may be very moral, devout, conscientious men, and may stand well on the ground of mere natural religion, but in Christianity they have no part nor lot. They are neither entitled to the name, nor privileges of Christians. They have departed from the great body of the church, as it was handed down from the apostles, they reject its authority, they deny transubstantiation, they refuse to submit to the enactments and Creeds of councils, they set at naught all the essential doctrines of the religion of Christ, and of course are not Christians. Their priesthood are destitute of all spiritual power and

authority, their ministrations of the word and ordinances are null and void, and they themselves are rebels against the authority of Christ in the person of his vicar the bishop of Rome.

The Protestant appeals from this decision. He denies the right of the church of Rome, or of any other church to legislate for his conscience. He asserts "*the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment.*" He appeals to the Scriptures, and denies that the peculiar doctrines of the Roman Catholic church are found in the Bible, and calls them human inventions. He appeals to the Gospel method of judging of true discipleship, "by their fruits ye shall know them." The true faith is tested by its power to purify the heart, and overcome the world. The lives and characters of Protestants have exhibited such fruits. Their holy lives, passed in all godliness and honesty, have demonstrated the sufficiency of their faith for the only purpose for which faith is valuable, to prepare the soul for heaven. But the Catholic rejoins, there is not an article of our Creed, which is not drawn immediately from Scripture and may be supported from it. And one doctrine to which you object, and which you deny, is asserted in so many words, "this is my body." Now if you deny this, you contradict Christ, and deny the Bible; and if you deny the Bible, you are no Christian, whatever you may pretend. And as to your holiness and good works, they may appear to men very fair and specious, you may exhibit a great deal of zeal and fervency and outward morality, but if your

faith is wrong, your actions cannot be right. They do not proceed from the right motive. Your faith is not right, and previous to your conversion to the right faith your best actions are only splendid sins.

The Protestant replies, It is not reasonable to suppose that Christ's words are to be taken literally when he says, "this is my body," and as to our characters, you cannot judge men's hearts; God only can do that. As man cannot go deeper than the outward actions, so he exceeds his powers and presumptuously arrogates the prerogative of God if he judges the heart bad on account of opinions, when the life is good.

The Catholic answers with surprise and scorn. Unreasonable! So you pretend to set up your carnal reason in opposition to Scripture! You reject a doctrine plainly stated in so many words in Scripture, merely because it contradicts your fallible reason! If such be the principles on which you proceed, there is an end to the authority of revelation. We may as well have no Scriptures, as to interpret them, not according to their literal import, but according to our reason. To dissent from the great body of the Church, and from the doctrine and authority handed down in direct and unbroken succession from the apostles, is heresy, and heretics are not Christians, are not entitled to the Christian name and privileges. So far from being acknowledged as Christians they are to be excommunicated and cast off. For this we have the express warrant of Scripture. "A man that is an heretic, after

the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth." The conscientious Catholic from principle, the partisan Catholic from policy, in all those places where the Protestant heresy was rife and likely to spread, would warn all good Catholics against the new doctrine as a soul destroying error. They would denounce its teachers as bad and dangerous men, they would forbid their people to listen to their teaching, and do all in their power to throw discredit on their cause.

The Protestant would complain of this, as an invasion of his Christian liberty. But if he belonged to any sect of Protestants who sustain a Creed, he would complain to his own condemnation. Suppose him to belong to the English Episcopal Church. He protests against the Church of Rome's legislating for his conscience, on the ground of the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment. But then he turns round and legislates for the consciences of others. He frames Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and declares that the sum of Christianity is contained in them. And although he does not say that all who do not assent to these Articles are not Christians, yet he does what is infinitely worse, he treats them as if they were not Christians. He deprives them of the right and privileges of Christians. He repels them from Christian ordinances, he shuts them out of the ministry of the Church, as much

as if they were heathens or Mahometans. He goes further, and shuts out the Dissenter, not only from his rights as a Christian, but from his rights as a citizen. He cuts him off from all share in the patrimony of the Church, which was given by the pious of past ages to the whole body of believers. He excludes him from all civil offices of honour, trust, and emolument. The bare denial of the Christian name is a mere trifle when compared to all this. The Churchman either believes the Dissenter a Christian, or he does not. If he does, he is bound to extend to him the equal rights of a Christian. If he does not, then he must confess himself just as bigoted towards the Dissenter as the Catholic is towards him.

The Dissenter complains of this in his turn and thinks himself hardly and unjustly treated. All of the name combine together and overthrow the Established Church. But have their former oppressions and sufferings taught them forbearance and respect for the rights of conscience and of private judgment? Not at all. The first thing they do, on coming into power, is to legislate for the consciences of others, and frame the Westminster Confession, a burden still more heavy than had ever been imposed upon the rational soul of man. As little mercy was shown to the Dissenters from that, as there had been to them when they were Dissenters. That Creed was transplanted to this country, and on our American soil, human blood has flowed at the whip.

ping post,* the lives of men have been sacrificed on the gallows for dissenting from a Protestant faith which set up for the motto of its banner when it separated from the Church of Rome, **THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.**

Soon these Dissenters began to dissent from each other. There sprung up the sect of the Baptists, and claimed to be the only true church in existence. They (I mean the Particular Baptists) unchurched, and of course denied the Christian name to all Christendom but themselves. None could be Christians except those who have been baptized by immersion. None others had the promise of salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But he that is not immersed is not baptized. He is not a Christian and must be repelled from the Christian ordinances; he has no promise, no reasonable hope of salvation. Having broken one commandment, he is "guilty of all." He is without the pale of God's covenanted mercy, and consequently exposed to damnation.

Thus you perceive how easy it is for any sect, great or small, to erect its own peculiar dogmas into the standard and criterion of Christian faith, and deny the Christian name, and rights and ordinances

* In 1650, a man of the name of Holmes, received thirty lashes at the whipping post in Boston, for professing and teaching the doctrines of the Baptists. On the 27th of October, 1659, three persons suffered death by the common hangman in the same place from the Puritans of New England, for their adherence to the sect of the Quakers.

to all those who will not receive their creed; and moreover to support this usurpation from the Scriptures by specious and plausible arguments. We have seen too that all have been disposed to exercise this usurpation when they have had the power. You perceive then that it is unsafe to adopt the peculiarities of any sect as indispensable to constitute a Christian. It must be something common to them all, or all are not Christians. And if all are not Christians, who is to decide who are and who are not? Every sect of course will maintain that they are the true Church, and if they insist that all their peculiarities are essential, then all who do not assent to them are not Christians. But if we examine this matter a little closer we find that these sects, minute as they are, are divided among themselves, and each party are more tenacious of the differences between themselves than they are of those points in which they differ from other sects, and oppose and persecute each other with more rancour than they do any one else. Are sectarians then to be trusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven? By no means. There is no reason why these subdivisions may not again subdivide, and so go on till each individual shall have a church of his own of which he is the only true and accepted member.

But at length a sect arises determined to carry out the principles of the Reformation not only in name but in fact. They abjure all creeds and take the Bible as their only standard of faith. They

study it by the best lights which they can command, and they find that many doctrines contained in the creeds are not found in the Bible, such as the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the Personality and Deity of the Spirit, original sin, vicarious punishment, irresistible conversion, and their kindred doctrines. They proclaim this to the world as the result of impartial, conscientious examination; and straight the old cry of heresy and unbelief is raised against them. On the first opening of this church, a learned Professor* addressed the inhabitants of this community in such language as this, "He who does not receive the doctrine of man's guilt and depravity by nature, and the doctrine of the divinity and atonement of the Son of God, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, does not receive the Gospel and is consequently no Christian. It follows with irresistible conviction to my mind that he who rejects these fundamental truths, however respectable, virtuous, and apparently devout he may be, rejects Christianity as really, though not under precisely the same circumstances, yet as really as any Deist ever did. And that he cannot with propriety be called a Christian in any sense." "Their preaching is to be avoided as blasphemy, their publications are to be abhorred as pestiferous, their ordinances are to be held unworthy of regard as Christian institutions; and these things being so, you ought to regard a proposition to go and hear them preach or to read their publications, as you would a proposition to hear a preacher of

* Samuel Miller, D. D. of Princeton.

open infidelity, or to read an artful publication of a follower of Herbert or Hume."

Such is the language, which a Protestant Divine, of the nineteenth century takes upon himself to use concerning persons who meet together to worship God in the name of Christ, and whom he supposes to be "respectable, virtuous, and apparently devout," merely because they do not receive what he chooses to deem the essential doctrines of Christianity. Such persons he chooses to class with the open revilers of Christ and his religion, and who labour to uproot and destroy it. But can he be a Protestant who writes thus, one who acknowledges the sufficiency of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment? Is he not aware that the denunciations of the church of Rome are quite as violent against him and all Protestants, as his are against those whom he condemns? Is he not aware that Catholics are warned from his ministrations, and his publications, with quite as deep a horror as he warns his own followers against those whom he denounces? Is he not aware how feeble and small his voice is heard compared with the thunders of the Vatican; he a partisan leader of small fragment, of a small division, of a small minority, beside the supreme Pontiff of the Eternal City, the acknowledged head of the most ancient and most numerous community of Christ's professed followers on earth?

The Presbyterian of whom I speak will perhaps answer to this, "There is a great difference between

my denunciations of the Unitarians, and the Catholic's denunciations of me. *I know that I am right.* The Catholic does not know that he is right. Besides the Unitarians have no religion. They do not go to conferences and prayer meetings. They attend balls and parties of pleasure and conform to the world. A religion which produces such fruits is no religion at all. Charity to such a religion is treason to Christ." But if this be the standard of Christian character, what may not the Catholic priest say to him? He may say, "It is very evident that you have no religion. You do not go to mass at early dawn. You are comfortably reposing in your bed, while the Catholic is kneeling to his God. You do not fast on Friday on which day our Lord was crucified, nor do penance for your sins. And as to conformity to the world, how can he have any thing to say on that subject, who dresses richly and lives like men of the world, who has a wife and the comforts and luxuries of a family about him? A very different life this from "giving up all for Christ." O what a different religion this is from that of Christ and his apostles, the confessors and martyrs! "Charity to such a religion is treason to Christ." The Presbyterian replies, "These are uncommanded austerities. There is no warrant for them in the Scriptures. Christians are left in these respects to their own judgments and consciences." "Point me if you can," answers the Unitarian in his turn, "to a single passage of the Bible, which forbids those

particular amusements you condemn. Christians therefore are left to their own judgments and consciences in these particulars."

It is a curious coincidence that the same objection of free living should have been made to Christ by the Pharisees of his days, on account of his neglecting to employ the common means of securing a reputation for sanctity, a sour deportment, and a sanctimonious abstinence from the innocent festivities of life. "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

The Presbyterian, to whom we have alluded may rejoin, "I am sincere in my belief, that all Unitarians are lost." And is the Catholic any less to be believed when he says it is his honest opinion that all Protestants are lost? "No, he cannot be sincere, because he sees we live a Christian life." But you have cut yourself off from this plea. The Catholic may turn round and condemn you out of your own mouth. He may take up your own words and say, "He who does not receive the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the doctrine of the supremacy of the Pope, and the doctrine of the intrinsic efficacy of the sacraments and of absolution, does not receive the Gospel, and is consequently, no Christian. It follows irresistibly to my mind that he who rejects these fundamental truths, *however respectable, virtuous and apparently devout he may be*, rejects Christianity as really, though not under precisely the same circumstances, yet as really as any Deist ever did. And that he cannot with pro-

priety be called a Christian in any sense. Their preaching is to be avoided as blasphemy, their publications are to be abhorred as pestiferous,* their ordinances are to be held unworthy of regard as Christian institutions; and these things being so, you ought to regard a proposition to go and hear them preach, or to read their publications, as you would a proposition to hear a preacher of open infidelity, or to read an artful publication of a follower of Herbert or Hume." Your lips are sealed. You cannot utter one word, not even bigotry or uncharitableness.

You openly profess to excommunicate and cut men off from the name and privileges of Christians, merely for opinion sake, without regard to moral and religious character, nay in the face of their apparent existence. What more can the Catholic do? You answer. "In countries where he has the power,† he burns the bodies and confiscates the estates of those who dissent from his creed. We do not this." We reply, The institutions of the country forbid it. You go as far as those institutions will allow. You attempt to deprive dissenters of their fair name, and to hold them up to the suspicion and odium of mankind, you attempt by legal means to drive them from their churches,‡ and turn them from their flocks upon the world. If you go to the very limit of the institutions under which you live, is there any evidence that you would not go further if you had the power?

* See note B.

† See note C.

‡ See note D.

But, you say, the Catholic rejects the Bible as the standard of faith,* and refers to the authority of Popes and Councils. Do you try heresy by the Bible? No! You try it by the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Divines at Westminster, and what is that but throwing away the Bible and referring to the authority of Councils? You try heresy by the standard of the Council of Westminster, and they by standards established by Councils a few centuries earlier, and that is all the difference between you. The Catholic says the Scriptures are an unsufficient rule of faith; "they are a nose of wax," which you may turn just as you please. The Presbyterian rebukes him for his irreverence. But it is merely for saying in coarse language what he says in language a little more refined. For what do we now hear from all quarters of the Orthodox world! "The Scriptures are not a sufficient test of soundness in the faith.† They are interpreted so many ways that it is in vain to think of having a pure church without something more definite and explicit."

But suppose one unacquainted with the distinctions and tactics of Christian sects were to land on our shores and chance to read these charges, and then to enter a church where God is worshipped in the name of Christ in Unity and instead of Trinity; would he not find it difficult to reconcile what he saw and heard with what he read? "Can it be pos-

* See note E.

† See note F.

sible," he would exclaim, "that these people reject and disbelieve Christianity, and still build churches to teach, and hear, and maintain, and propagate it? Especially would they do so, if it subjects them to sacrifices and obloquy, when they might enjoy their unbelief unmolested, as many others do, and profit by a fair reputation for Orthodoxy, merely by external conformity to some of the reigning sects, and saying nothing about their belief, or might withdraw without more injury to their rights or characters from any connection with Christianity at all? It is impossible; there must be either some mistake or some wilful misrepresentation."

While in the church he would hear God worshipped in the name and through the mediation of Christ. He would hear his Gospel read and expounded as a divine revelation, as the word of God, and containing the only infallible rule of faith and practice. He would hear the reality of his miracles acknowledged. He would see him commemorated in the Supper as having died for man, as having risen from the dead, and as now living in heaven. An unbeliever rejects all this. "Can men," he would exclaim, "believe, and not believe at the same time? These men certainly do not reject, they receive Christianity; they have been either ignorantly, or maliciously slandered."

He wishes to examine further into the justice of this charge, and he makes inquiry what it is necessary to believe, in order to be a Christian. How

is he to come at this? Why plainly, he must examine the arguments of believers with unbelievers, and see what the believer asserts and the unbeliever denies. He takes up a book on the Evidences of Christianity, perhaps those of Paley, and he finds the great proposition which his whole work was intended to sustain is this; "That there is satisfactory evidence, that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief in those accounts; and that they submitted from the same motives to new rules of conduct." Or, perhaps, he might have taken up the book on the Evidences, published lately in this country by Bishop McIlvaine, a believer in all those disputed points we have been examining. The great question between the believer and the unbeliever is summed up by him in the following proposition, "Is the religion of Jesus, as exhibited in the New Testament, a revelation from God, and consequently possessed of a sovereign right to universal faith and obedience?"

The question between the believer and the unbeliever, according to both these defenders of the faith, is between miracles and no miracles, revelation and no revelation. He who believes in the miracles, and the reality of the revelation, receives Christianity, for it is the object of both to prove the truth of Christianity. He who rejects the miracles

and the revelation, rejects Christianity. That class of men to which I referred as slandered, receive and believe the miracles, receive and believe the revelation. These books were written for the express purpose of converting infidels from unbelief to the belief of what? Precisely what Unitarians now believe, the Divine origin and authority of the Gospel. If these men have stated the question on its true merits, they may convert a man to the belief of Christianity, and still, according to our learned and charitable divine, he is an infidel! How can they be said, with the least regard to truth or candour, to reject Christianity? With what truth, or fairness, or even decency, can those who receive the Christian miracles and the Gospel as a revelation from God, be classed with Herbert and Hume, who denied them both? It requires a meekness almost superhuman to bear a calumny so wanton and unjust.

Well, and what do the Christian miracles prove? Do they prove that Christ was God, or a Person in God? By no means. What then do they prove? They prove that the doctrines he taught were from God. They prove his Divine inspiration, and nothing more. They do not touch his metaphysical nature at all. The revelation, when confirmed by miracles, is equally true and certain whatever may have been his nature. It is the same on every hypothesis. Hear himself on this subject. "But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish,

the same works that I do, bear witness of me," not that I am this or that by nature, but "that the Father hath sent me."

The impartial examiner of the evidences and sects of Christianity, after this explanation, would know how to appreciate the denunciation he had read of the worshippers of one God in the name of Christ, as rejecting Christianity. He would perceive that the question as to the miracles, the inspiration, the Divine authority of Christ is fundamental, the turning point between belief and unbelief. But the question concerning Christ's metaphysical rank and nature, is a question of interpretation between the sects of Christianity. And the origin of this denunciation is the refusal of one sect to adopt the interpretation of another sect, which they attempt to dictate upon that common revelation which all receive, and of which all have an equal right to judge. The worshippers of one God in one person, are denounced as unbelievers, as rejecting Christianity, not because they do actually reject the Gospel as a divine revelation, for they receive it as such, but because they reject the interpretation, which others choose to put upon it.

If we compare these things with Scripture, we shall find this simplicity of belief in admirable accordance with the confessions of faith made by some and required of others of the early Christians. Who was the first convert and member of the Christian Church? It was Peter. And what was

his confession of faith? "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;" or as it is reported in Mark, "Thou art the Christ." Jesus answered, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thou art my first convert, the corner stone of the new edifice, never to be destroyed. That "Christ," and "Son of God," were synonymous, I have already explained. They were both Jewish phrases, significative of the Divine commission and authority of their expected Messiah. This was the only confession of faith required of the eunuch, whom Philip converted and baptized, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." "If thou," says Paul to the Romans, "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved."

These considerations, moreover, explain the propriety of the formula of baptism, as an epitome or abstract of faith, to be confessed in order to admission into the Christian Church. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father," into a profession of belief in one God, the Father Almighty, and "of the Son," that is as we have before explained the Divine authority of Jesus of Nazareth, and "of the Holy Ghost;" into a belief of the miracles by which his mission was proved and established, which are often in Scripture termed the Holy Ghost. Such is the simplicity of the Christian's

Creed, for which the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Christianity is the same now that it was then, and the same Creed which was sufficient then is sufficient now. We have arrived then at the answer of the first part of our present inquiry, what is it necessary for a man to believe in order to be a Christian? He must believe in the Divine origin of Christ's teaching and miracles, and that God raised him from the dead.

We now come to the second part of our inquiry, what is it necessary for a man to practise in order to be a Christian, and as such to be entitled to the name, privileges, and hopes of a Christian?

This part of our subject, I confess, is surrounded with more difficulties than the other, from the very nature of the case. Because it is more easy to judge of what is true or what is revealed in the language of the Scriptures, than to judge of human character and conduct. I confess that is impossible to judge that we ourselves, much less any other persons whose hearts we do not and cannot know, are true Christians in a state of salvation and acceptance with God. No one in this life, such I believe to be the design of God, can arrive at a state of perfect assurance. The most that we can do is to entertain a hope, a strong confidence that we are in that state; and that others, of whom we form an opinion, are also. On what is this hope and confidence founded, and on what ought it to be founded? We reply, upon the general tenor of the life and actions. This evidence is, indeed,

imperfect, because we cannot see the heart and the motives; but it is the best, and only standard we can adopt. A good life, a Christian practice, is the only evidence that man can give or man can require of a Christian character. Our Saviour has given us this rule of judging, "by their fruits ye shall know them." We have already seen the Creed which it is necessary for a man to adopt in order to be a Christian. We now see what Creed is necessary in a practical sense for the same purpose, such a belief as produces a Christian life. When the most simple faith is accompanied with such a life, we cannot withhold the name and character of Christian. And where this practical character does not exist, no matter how long or how mysterious the Creed, the seal of true discipleship is wanting, and the name and hopes of a Christian are entertained in vain.

But is it not necessary for him to have some experiences to relate, to be able to tell when, how and where he became a Christian? Not in the least. If his life be truly Christian, such experiences are unnecessary. They add nothing of evidence. If the life be not Christian they are certainly deceptive. Nothing is more uncertain, equivocal and suspicious as a test of character than mental exercises. They come and go with health or disease, with excitement or tranquillity, with sympathy or solitude. But a patient continuance in well doing, a calm and conscientious discharge of duty, accompanied by that faith in

Christ which we have described, concerning these there is less danger of mistake, and as far as human judgment can go, they leave no doubt. Such is the endless variety of temperament, circumstance, education, that no invariable rule can be laid down for the formation of the Christian character. It is sufficient for us to know it when it really exists. The true follower of Christ is not he who believes him to be this or that in the scale of being, or who ranges himself under the name of Paul or Apollos or of any peculiar sect, but he who *obeys and imitates him*. Here then is the true criterion. He who obeys and imitates Christ, he is the true Christian. Now we ask if this is confined to any sect or denomination? "The grace of God" "hath appeared to all men, teaching us" to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Are there not those who live thus among every division of the professed followers of Christ? We all know there are. Why then will not all sects acknowledge this? I lament to say it, but the truth must be spoken—it is mutual jealousy of each other. By acknowledging it they would abase the pretensions of their own peculiarities from essentials into non-essentials, and allow the comparative unimportance of those points on which they have been accustomed to lay so much stress, and on which their very party was raised up and sustained. As soon as this is allowed, the means of building themselves up by terror and anathema are destroyed. As soon as it is allowed that any one can be saved out of the pale of their church, then they can no longer

exhort men to flee to it as the only ark of safety. Men are tempted then by two of the strongest principles in their nature, pride of opinion and self interest, to make their peculiar dogmas indispensable to salvation. And it is a temptation, alas! which too few are able to resist. It is so much easier to play upon people's prejudices and fears and party attachments, than to enlighten and convince their understandings, that it requires a greater love of truth and more entire disinterestedness than even the best men possess, entirely to abstain from it.

But let it not be understood, because I would allow, and have others allow the Christian name, privileges and hopes to all who acknowledge the divine authority of Christ and at the same time exhibit the Christian character, that I would be or have others to be indifferent to truth. Let that be sought with all diligence. But in the mean time, while we are doing this let us not denounce and anathematize each other. Let us examine calmly and dispassionately and without the biasses of excited feeling and party spirit. What chance has the mind to arrive at the truth, if it have hanging over it the pains of exclusion and denunciation? What freedom has the mind to investigate the truth, if it have already subscribed to a Creed, and have learned to consider it as something to defend instead of something to examine? The Bible is then studied not to discover what is true or what it teaches, but is ransacked to find texts to corroborate a foregone conclusion. It is the contest for power and

party, not the great and irreconcilable differences of creed and opinion, which gives asperity and bitterness to sects and parties. For it is found that those are most hostile whose tenets are nearest each other, which shows that it is rivalry and not regard for important truth which is at the bottom of their strife and mutual denunciation. Let us investigate truth with zeal and earnestness, but let us not use the sacred and venerable name of Christian as an instrument of party power, by giving or withholding it, to build up or put down a sect whose interests we wish to serve or ruin.

The identity of the Christian character is the great bond of Christian union. Identity of sentiment and opinion can never be attained. Such are the diversities of external circumstances, of education, of degrees of light and knowledge, that the same truths will always appear differently to different minds. And so long as these unavoidable differences are embodied in Creeds and made the fences and ramparts of sects, so long will they keep the Christian world divided. But as far as men are true Christians, so far are they all alike in moral qualities, and on mutual acquaintance will love and esteem each other. All true Christians venerate in others above every thing else on earth, those moral qualities which they cultivate in themselves; integrity, which may be relied on to the death, and with which you feel yourself forever safe; candour, which will make proper allowances for your weaknesses and your prejudices, and will not use them to crush

and ruin you; just appreciation of your virtues, without envy or detraction, notwithstanding diversities of sentiment or clashing of interests; delight in whatsoever is pure, lovely and good. These are the qualities of a Christian, and these qualities will draw the heart of every other true Christian to their possessor. It is the want of these characteristics of true practical religion, of real Christianity, and not wide disagreement of opinion, which is the occasion of strife and war among the followers of Christ. They fulfil the great token of discipleship which Christ has left us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." They are to love each other, not because they belong to the same party, for conspirators may have that ground of attachment, but because there will be in them those amiable qualities pre-eminently which necessarily form a common bond between the truly good.

The Christian character has fortunately been delineated in the New Testament too plainly to be mistaken by any candid enquirer. The example of Christ himself is a practical commentary on his religion too obvious to be misunderstood. The spirit of Christ is more easily read than even his written commandments. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue know-

ledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Such traits of character as these can never be mistaken. To believe in the divine authority of Jesus Christ and to lead a sober, righteous and godly life, these constitute a Christian, and ought to constitute a bond of union among all who take upon them his sacred and venerable name. Such is the result of scriptural investigation, and it is corroborated by the dictates of charity and experience. For the moment you abandon this scriptural and charitable ground, as soon as you demand any thing else, you shatter the Christian church into a thousand fragments, and make Christianity, instead of a bond of union and affection among mankind, an apology for hatred and strife, and the indulgence of the very worst passions of our nature. As soon as you assert that a Christian life, accompanied by an acknowledgment of Christ's divine authority, is not sufficient, and that it requires the mysterious leaven of some peculiar faith to sanctify it and make it acceptable to God, then every petty sect in Christendom will insist on

putting in their own peculiar dogmas and shutting the kingdom of heaven against all who will not subscribe to them. The moment you allow any one to say that a good life is not good and acceptable to God because it does not proceed from the right principle, the right motive, the right faith, then you reverse the rule of our Saviour and judge the fruit by the tree instead of the tree by the fruit; you must allow each man to define that sanctifying principle to be his own peculiarities of faith, and thus subject the best of men to be judged and condemned and persecuted by the worst.

I allow that the sect which adopts this enlarged, liberal, and Christian principle, does not consult best for its rapid spread and spiritual domination, for it strikes at the very root of sectarianism itself. It forbids the use of the great engine of party, party spirit. It forbids the propagation of the sentiments of a party for the sake of its growth. It forbids that spirit of exclusion and censoriousness so grateful to the pride of the human heart; for no one condemns another without secretly flattering himself. It can grow only with the increase of light, candour, and charity, with a love of the truth for its own sake, and not for the advantages which may be made of it, the benefits of social combination and a fair public standing and reputation.

Persecution was once thought a religious duty, and a backwardness to exercise it a sure symptom of lukewarmness and want of zeal in the cause of Christ. And civil toleration was represented as a certain mark of indifference to truth, and the

readiest way to destroy all religion. Time and experience have corrected these mistakes, and proved that piety flourishes most when there is the least external restraint, where the rights of conscience are most respected. The only vestige of that spirit which now remains is the combination to withhold the Christian name and privileges from those who vary from the popular faith. That, however, is likewise in a fair way of being corrected. The real unbelievers, the real rejecters of Christ and his religion, are showing and avowing themselves in such a manner as to leave no doubt as to the true nature of unbelief, and of the readiness of those who have rejected the faith, to cast off likewise the name of Christians. That the worshippers of one God in one Person in the name of Christ, do not range themselves on that side, ought to be sufficient evidence to all candid minds that they share neither in their sentiments nor their feelings.

I conclude, by exhorting all who hear me to examine themselves whether they be in the faith, whether they have this belief in Christ and his revelation strong within them. If they have it, whether it be living or dead, whether it be a cold speculation of the brain, or an active principle pervading the whole life. I would entreat you to examine whether it merely fills the mind occasionally with fear and regret, or be a "faith which worketh by love," purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

"To raise up one sect and pull down another."—It is not often that the motive for denouncing Unitarians and withholding from them the Christian name is avowed. It sometimes however comes out in the heat of argument or the earnestness of exhortation. The following extract from a Farewell Sermon of the Rev. Wells Bushnell, late Pastor of the Presbyterian church, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, is a curious specimen of this undesigned avowal of motive.

"Now I would solemnly warn you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, against any kind of compromise, in religious matters with those who hold and inculcate the soul-ruining sentiments to which I have just alluded. Let not the senseless cry of bigotry, intolerance, and persecution prevent you from calling that system of religion by its right name, viz. a refined kind of deism—absolute infidelity—another gospel—and, in the language of Scripture, a damnable heresy. Be assured, Unitarianism, in some of its forms, such is its adaptation to the depraved hearts of men, will gain ground among you, unless the friends of evangelical truth continue to bear their united and solemn testimony against it. Only let the sentiment become common among the Orthodox, that it is possible for Unitarians to be true Christians, and to be saved, while relying upon that system, and the mischief that will follow no tongue can tell. When that fatal hour arrives, (I pray God it may never come,) then will the glory have departed from all your churches."

So the Orthodox are to denounce the Unitarians with one united voice, and deny the possibility of their salvation, lest Unitarianism should spread and the glory of the churches should depart; that is in plain language, the Christian name is to be made use of to crush one sect and uphold another, and given or withheld as a matter of church policy! "But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said: What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

NOTE B.

"Their preaching is to be avoided as blasphemy, their publications are to be abhorred as pestiferous."—The Catholic Church has a catalogue of prohibited books, an *Index Expurgatorius*, as it is called, drawn up by priests and sanctioned by the Pope, which no Catholic may read on pain of censure. To carry out the principle here advanced, Dr. Miller and the General Assembly ought to publish an *Index Expurgatorius* for the benefit and direction of the American Presbyterian Church.

NOTE C.

"He burns the bodies and confiscates the estates of those who dissent from his Creed."—Oh, the dreadful Inquisition! It was bad enough to be sure, and we believe it now finds but few advocates. But what was the principle on which it was established? That heresy, dissent, difference of opinion from the church is a moral crime,

and as such to be punished. Whether a moral crime shall be a civil crime, depends upon the civil power of those who think it such. There can be no scruples of conscience in the way of punishing a moral crime; the question is only that of expediency. That church which excommunicates for opinion's sake, punishes heresy by the most efficient means in her power, treats honest opinion as a moral delinquency, acts upon the very principle of the Inquisition, and shews herself to be the legitimate daughter of the Church of Rome, so far as the treatment of heretics is concerned. Both proceed upon the same assumption, that the church has a right to define orthodoxy and to punish heresy. Both take it for granted that the heretic must be a bad man and no Christian. If he were a good man he would think as we do. Both practically say, there is no salvation without adopting our opinions. The Presbyterian excommunicates a heretic on whose character no blemish rests, merely for his opinions. He must think him either a good man and finally to be admitted to heaven, or a bad man on the way to perdition. If he believe him a bad man on account of his opinions, he adopts the very principle of the Catholics, that no one can be saved, however good his life, without receiving those doctrines which they deem essential. If he believe him a good man and a member of the true invisible church, then he must confess that he excommunicates him to discourage or punish his opinions, in order to prevent their spread; that is, he makes use of church censures to stop and put down heresy, the very principle the Catholic acts upon. He is guilty, moreover, of this inconsistency, he punishes a faith as dangerous and damnable, which, in the instance he has before him, has demonstrated its sufficiency for all the purposes of a reli-

gious faith, to produce a good life. He attempts to crush by ecclesiastical power, that freedom of opinion with which God has unalienably endowed every human being, and which is guaranteed by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament. He assumes power which even the apostles thought it usurpation to claim—dominion over the faith of Christians.

I know not the precise amount of pain which was endured in a few hours' torture by the victim of the Inquisition, but I do know that in a small community where a Presbyterian Church bears sway, and church-membership carries with it the stamp and assurance of character, to a person of a sensitive and delicate mind to be repelled from the communion, even for heresy, and treated like a criminal, suffering as his reputation must in the eyes of those who cannot understand the merits of the case, this I know must be torture most acute, and in the course of years may amount to more than the most cruel death.

But to make it out a moral offence, it is said it is a breach of covenant. He has subscribed to a Creed. And what right had any Christian or number of Christians to require, or he to assent to a Creed? "One is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren." What right had others to invade, or he to surrender that "liberty wherewith Christ" had made him "free?" Where is the propriety of a disciple, an inquirer after truth subscribing to a Creed at any period of his life, and especially at the very commencement of his studies? Why should he expose himself to be punished for being wiser to-morrow than he is to-day, for gaining more truth by wider investigation? Opinion must change with evidence. To punish that change is tyranny in the extreme.

NOTE D.

"You attempt by legal means to drive them from their churches."—The bitter persecution of the Rev. J. M. Duncan, of Baltimore by the Presbyterians, and their attempt to expel him from his church, fresh in the memory of this community, are a more impressive commentary on the dangers of sectarian and ecclesiastical usurpation, than any of the homilies which have lately been read to the Christian public. Nothing seems to have been wanting in this case, but that very union of church and state which has existed in Catholic countries, to have carried out the most summary method of silencing heresy.

NOTE E.

"But you say the Catholic rejects the Bible as the standard of faith, and refers to the authority of Popes and councils."—Read the following declaration, or rather oath, as it may be considered, which the Theological Professor of the Princeton Seminary, is obliged to subscribe when he enters on his duties. "I do solemnly promise and engage, not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate, any thing which shall appear to me to contradict or contravene, either directly or impliedly, any thing taught in the Confession of Faith, or Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church." For ourselves we are unable to conceive in what terms any Jesuit in any college in Christendom could more explicitly renounce the Bible as a standard of faith, surrender his right of private judgment and "subscribe slave" as Milton has well expressed it, swear subjection to the decrees and canons of the Catholic Church, than this Protestant Professor does to the Creed of the Presbyterian Church; which is nothing else, only under

a different name, than the canons of the Council of Westminster. If the Professor, in the course of his studies, becomes convinced that the Bible does not teach all the doctrines of the Confession and Catechisms, he must either conceal his convictions and suppress what he believes the truth of the Bible, or violate his solemn pledge, or vacate his office. Civil liberty is certainly not in danger. *Principle* is all that is contended for. And after such developments, we ask, if in the contest for liberty, it belongs to the Presbyterian to cast the first stone?

I said that civil liberty is not in danger. Upon second thoughts I am disposed to retract that assertion. In Boston, where there is the most danger of men's thinking for themselves, in order to secure the power of the church, defeat the republican tendency of our institutions, and fix their Creed on coming generations, the Orthodox vested the property in a church built there a few years ago, in trustees under conditions by which every pewholder, unless a communicant, forever disfranchises himself of his right of voting for the Pastor, and gives up that power exclusively to the communicants. The Pastor and the church hold the keys of admission to the communion, and of course will admit none who will not subscribe to their Creed, and so by this indirection hope to monopolize the whole power to themselves. Here is violated that very principle, which when violated by the British government set the American Continent in a blaze of rebellion and caused the war of the revolution, the principle that taxation and the right of suffrage ought to go together. Men, whose principles permit them to do such things, ought, I think, to discuss the question with great caution:—Whether the Roman Catholic religion be consistent with civil liberty?

NOTE F.

"The Scriptures are not a sufficient test of soundness in the faith."—Ten or twelve years ago, Dr. Miller, of Princeton, wrote and delivered the following paragraph:

"The inference, then, plainly is, that no church can hope to maintain a homogeneous character;—no church can be secure either of purity or peace, for a single year;—nay, no church can effectually guard against the highest degrees of corruption and strife, without some test of truth, explicitly agreed upon, and adopted by her, in her ecclesiastical capacity: something *recorded*; something *publicly known*; something capable of being *referred to* when most needed; which not merely this or that private member *supposes* to have been received; but to which the church *as such* has *agreed to adhere*, as a bond of union. In other words, a church, in order to maintain 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and love,' must have a CREED—a WRITTEN CREED—to which she has formally given her assent, and to a conformity to which her ministrations are pledged. As long as such a test is *faithfully applied*, she cannot fail of being in some good degree united and harmonious; and when nothing of the kind is employed, I see not how she can be expected, without a miracle, to escape all the evils of discord and corruption."

We ask any candid mind, if there is any difference in the principles here stated and advocated, and that which established and sustains the Catholic Church. Every church must have a Creed to secure "purity and peace." Why? For no other reason than that the Scriptures are too indefinite. Was not this the very plea on which the Catholic Creeds were established? Were not they intended to secure uniformity of faith? And had not the church universal the same right to establish a Creed for the church universal, that any particular church has for her own members?

But their efficacy, it seems, depends on their *faithful application*. "As long as such a test is faithfully applied she cannot fail in being in some good degree united and harmonious." The calm of despotism only! How can a Creed be faithfully applied to the ministry, where church and state are not united? This is plainly only a milder term for *enforced*. And how can that be done? In no other way, surely, in a free country, than by church censures, excommunication. But excommunication of ministers is powerless, unless it have the aid of the civil arm, unless there is a union of church and state. In nine cases out of ten the heretical minister will carry his church with him. So that a "*faithful application*" of a Creed can have no other effect in a free country, than to destroy the body which enforces it.

But "no church can exist, no church can hope to maintain a homogeneous character, no church can be secure either of purity or peace for a single year without a Creed." The Presbyterian Church, for instance, according to this, cannot exist without a Creed. And what does this prove? Not that Creeds are proper or lawful, but that there ought to be no such combination or body as the Presbyterian Church, if a necessary element of that combination must be the establishment of a Creed, which shall destroy, or cramp in the least degree, the exercise of an unalienable right, that of free examination and declaration of that which seems to us to be truth.

) The fact is, and the more fully it is known the better, that Creeds belong to a state of things gone by. They belong only to a union of church and state. Without the civil arm to enforce them they are a rope of sand, and the attempt to "*apply*" them only makes them ludicrous. They are a lingering shade of a substance forever gone.

Ten or twelve years make great changes in this changing world. Since Dr. Miller wrote the paragraph we have cited, enough has occurred in his own church to show the efficiency of a Creed to maintain a *homogeneous character* and secure *purity and "peace."* Its strifes are ringing from one end of the country to the other. The venerable Dr. Green, of Philadelphia, formerly President of Princeton College, has lately made such disclosures on this subject as show the "*faithful application*" of Creeds to be a matter of more difficulty than was once supposed. Speaking of the new school of divinity he says:—

"It is a fact too notorious to be denied, that doctrines vitally affecting the whole evangelical system, and directly contradictory to those laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, are both preached and published without fear, or cause of fear, that their advocates and propagators will be visited with the discipline of the church."

"The course we are pursuing is exactly that which has been run by the Calvinistic and Lutheran churches of Switzerland and Germany. In those countries, the Formularies adopted at, or shortly after, the Protestant reformation, remain to this day unchanged,—unchanged, as the ostensible Creed and symbols of ecclesiastical order, of Unitarians and Neologists. We are rapidly tending to the same goal, and if, in the mercy of God, we are not arrested, we shall as surely reach it, as that like causes produce like effects."

"They well know that there is *a large party*,—in the General Assembly of the church, probably *a majority*,—who, either through fellowship with their errors, or reluctance to offend those who are in such fellowship, will see them safe and sound through any jeopardy into which the orthodox may endeavour to bring them. Again. Look at the Theological Seminaries in our Land, that send forth their pupils to become, and who actually and immediately become, minis-

ters in the Presbyterian church. Are nineteen-twentieths of these, substantially sound in the faith? Have the professors of the Seminary in which Dr. M. sustains his office, been able to prevent many of their pupils from maintaining and advocating, through their whole course, several of the obnoxious sentiments to which we have adverted; and from preaching and publishing them, after they have left the institution? We know they have not."

"Once more, and finally.—Whether it is known to Professor M. or not, it is known to us, that on one side there are strong hopes, and on the other side strong fears, that in the event of the death of any one of the present professors of the Princeton Seminary, a man of the same, or similar theological tenets with the defunct, could not be chosen in his place. 'Nineteen-twentieths' of our clergy substantially sound in the faith, when this is the case! Impossible.—We fear that even a majority will not be found so, or not found so with sufficient firmness and decision, whenever another professor is to be elected in that Seminary. We are ready to weep over the prospect; although it is probable we shall not live to see the event. Our duty, we think, consists in making known the danger, that measures may, if possible, be taken to prevent its being realized."

In another part of the same Review, Dr. Green asserts, (I quote the sentiment from memory,) that in some places the forms of the Presbyterian Church are used to take vengeance on an obnoxious individual, and in other cases where there are personal or party reasons for it, discipline is permitted to sleep. If this be the case, every friend of religious liberty must hope that his forebodings as to the fate of such a combination may speedily be fulfilled.

THE END.

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CHURCH AND STATE:

OR THE

PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

OF AN

AMERICAN CITIZEN.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY, DECEMBER 12, 1844,

BY

Washington
GEORGE W. BURNAP.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY,

Corner of Market and St. Paul-sts.

1844.

DISCOURSE.

Psalm, cxxii: 6.—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

RELIGION and politics, Church and State, our God and our country, these have been the subjects which have created the deepest interest in the mind and heart of man, ever since the race began to be separated into families, communities, nations; and will continue to be the leading matters of thought, communication and feeling, till society itself shall be dissolved in the final wreck of all things. Religion and attachment to our native soil, piety and patriotism, were the deep foundations upon which the legislators of old, erected the pillars of society, and raised the fair proportions of states, kingdoms and empires. In the first ages with which history makes us acquainted, Church and State were identical, the patriarch was at the same time priest and king, and civil obedience was secured by religious veneration.

Abraham and Melchizedek ministered at the altar, at the same time that they reigned over their respective people. In Egypt, at the same period, as we learn incidentally from the Bible, the same amalgamation of Church and State prevailed, for Joseph, as soon as he rose to be first minister of state, was incorporated in the sacerdotal family, by receiving in marriage the daughter of the priest of On. This was the natural order of things, Church and

State were both weak, and could stand only by holding up each other. But this consolidated power, combining the forces of both worlds, necessarily, as kingdoms became larger, hardened into a crushing despotism, impregnable to change, and incapable of amelioration; and in all probability, the pyramids themselves are the monuments of the first experiment in human government, of a State, the balance of which was destroyed from the beginning, by amalgamating the civil and ecclesiastical power.

In the Jewish commonwealth, the attempt was made to remedy this hopeless despotism, by the severance of the royal and sacerdotal offices. Moses contented himself with being the military leader and civil magistrate of the Israelites. All priestly functions were given over to the family of Aaron. When the nation was settled in the promised land, this distribution of powers was scrupulously preserved, till they were once more accidentally united in the family of Judas Maccabeus, a few generations before Christ. This partial separation of Church and State, in the Hebrew commonwealth, was a great reform on every thing that had gone before; and to those who have carefully studied the history of that remarkable people, it is wonderful with what jealousy God watched over this feature in their political constitution. Twice the attempt was made to unite the royal and sacerdotal offices, and each time the attempt was effectually rebuked by God. This usurpation cost Saul his throne. We read that, on a certain occasion, when he was in great distress, he ventured on an invasion of the priestly office. "And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed, and Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, bring hither a burnt offering to *me*, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt

offering, behold Samuel came. And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue." Such a gross violation of Jewish constitution, in its most important and fundamental principle, utterly disqualified Saul for continuing the chief magistrate of the nation. The attempt was again made by king Uzziah. He went into the temple to burn incense, and was smitten with leprosy upon the spot. So scrupulously did God himself preserve the political reform introduced into the Jewish commonwealth. Still, however, Judaism was a national religion, and the ecclesiastical establishment was upheld by the civil power, and their temple was the great rallying point of patriotism as well as piety. And at that period of the world, it is doubtful if the true religion could have stood alone. When Christ came, the world was ripe for another and still farther reform, the *entire* separation of the civil from the ecclesiastical power. Indeed, it followed from the spirituality and universality of his religion. The Saviour of the *world* could not be author of a *national* religion. It could have no central abode, or temple on the earth. Its author was soon to be exalted to heaven, and rule his church from the invisible throne of truth. His kingdom could not identify itself with any earthly dominion, for then it would have been shaken by those revolutions, which in a few years, crumble the thrones of the widest monarchies. Its kingdom was the soul of man, under all forms of government, equally subject to its sway. The word went forth from the lips of him, whose word shall never pass away, though heaven and earth were dissolved, "Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." This

most important principle, when once established, enabled the kingdom of Christ to co-exist with all the kingdoms of the world. There was no point, so long as the church restricted itself to that sphere in which its founder intended it to act, in which it could come in collision with any earthly government. Cæsar might be king or emperor, elected by the people, or reign by hereditary right, still the duties which were owed to him, interfered not with those spiritual obligations which were due to God. Thus was Christ's kingdom calculated to be universal. So long as the Christian church was in a minority, and a persecuted sect, this principle of the separation of Church and State was *carried out* by the force of circumstances. The *only* power which the church could exercise was a spiritual one. Her first place of meeting was an upper room. Her first preachers were illiterate fishermen, and her first converts were accounted the offscouring of the earth. For the first three centuries their churches were, for the most part, the apartments of private houses, and sometimes their devotions went up from caves and tombs. Their bishops were, in a majority of cases, honest, but plain and unpretending citizens, who gave some part of their time to the superintendence of the humble affairs of a despised and persecuted sect.

But the conversion of a Roman Emperor changed the whole aspect of their condition. From a persecuted sect, they became a dominant religion; but it was by the sacrifice of the whole reform which Christianity itself had introduced, the separation of Church and State; and it carried the world back to where it was before the advent of the Redeemer. Jesus had said, "My kingdom is not of this world." But his followers, as soon as they had the opportunity, as eagerly seized on temporal dominion, as if they were the followers of some ambitious conqueror, whose only object was the subjugation of the world.

When the church had once got its grasp upon temporal power, it pursued with steady aim, the enlargement of its influence, till it absolutely crowded the Emperor out of his throne, and the successors of the apostles, whom their humble Master forbade to suffer themselves to be called Rabbi even, became temporal princes, and one of them at this moment *reigns* in that city, which was once the mistress of the world.

What tongue can tell, what imagination can conceive, the mischief which this violation of a fundamental article of the constitution of the Christian church has occasioned to the world? It annihilated and reversed, not only the reform introduced by Christianity; but likewise that of Judaism itself, and carried back the world into the despotism of Egypt, where king and priest were identical. For the effect is the same, whether the priest usurps the throne, or the king usurps the priesthood. Both are crimes of equal magnitude against the welfare of mankind. How criminal and dangerous the All-seeing eye perceived to be the consolidation of the civil and sacerdotal power, we learn from the history of king Uzziah. We read in the Chronicles, of him, that "when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, *and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense* upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him four-score priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him: It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast transgressed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before

the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the altar of incense. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death." Such a crime was it in the sight of God, even in the twilight of the Mosaic dispensation, to consolidate the royal and the priestly offices, the civil and the sacerdotal power. And yet, this was the very thing which was done under the superior illumination of Christianity, not indeed by the intrusion of the civil magistrate into the sanctuary, but by the *priest's mounting the throne*. Christianity, however, contained the elements of its own redemption. It was essentially intellectual and spiritual in its nature. The very principles of association in it, were faith,—a free assent of the understanding, and a voluntary allegiance of the heart and life. These things lie not in the sphere of human compulsion. The citizenship of the kingdom of God did not descend, like that of the Jewish commonwealth, by hereditary succession. In the language of the Saviour, when speaking of this very subject, the allegiance of the soul is free, free as the winds of heaven, "The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." Human governments, outward organizations, rule over the bodies of men. Spirit alone can rule their souls. Repressed for more than a thousand years, by the amalgamation of Church and State, the spiritual element of Christianity again broke out at the Reformation. It was this, which inspired the intrepid soul of Luther, to hurl, he scarce knew why, defiance at the priestly usurper of the seven hills. "Convince me," said he to an august as-

sembly of nobles and ecclesiastics, "convince me out of the Scriptures, or I never will recant;" and he uttered the very essence of religious freedom.

But how could men *regain* that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free? Luther had found in the library of the University of Erfurt, a Latin Bible, and he had read it. It told the story of "the stone cut out of the mountain, *without hands*, which filled the whole earth." He had discovered the constitution of the Christian church, buried in the dust and rubbish of ages. There he read, that Christ himself had refused a kingly crown, and declared that he was to reign by the spiritual power of truth alone. And what did he see in actual existence? His professed followers, *wearing* the crown which he had *refused*, and governing the minds of men, not by the power of truth and persuasion, but of authority and force. How could the Christianity of the Bible be restored? In no other way surely, but by severing its union with the State. That, Luther did not perceive, and he dissolved its connexion with the Pope, only to form a new one with the princes of Germany.

Just so it was in England. When the English church separated from Rome, she did not dissolve her connexion with the State. She deposed a bishop, who was at the same time a prince, only to place at her head, a prince who was not even a bishop, and her bishops to this day sit in parliament as a part of the civil government. And it may well be doubted, whether the church ever would have become free, had she not fled, as she did in the Apocalyptic vision, into the wilderness. Here, far away from the despotisms and deep seated abuses of the old world, she might create, upon the basis of the Gospel, a new form, a new order of society. And God seems expressly to have reserved this continent for the final experiment of the human race. In no country in the old world,

could the ideal of Christianity ever have been realized; at least not for many ages to come.

But Christianity contained the germ of the *political*, as well as religious, regeneration of the world. We read of the disciples, almost at the outset of their enterprize, when they were in want of certain official persons to superintend a department of their affairs, that they "*chose* Stephen," and six more whose names are given, and set them over the work. But our word, "*chose*," does not convey the full force of the Greek original. That expresses likewise the idea, that they were chosen by the lifting up of the hands of a multitude. It was a *popular election*. And what an innovation was that, upon the dreary monotony of a universal despotism, in which all official power and dignity emanated from the appointment of one, instead of the choice of the many! What a precedent for a society that was to spread all over the earth, and endure to the end of time, and embrace multitudes of the citizens of every nation under heaven! This simple movement was indeed portentous to the destinies of the human race. Here, in fact, was the germ of all modern freedom, the model of representative government. It is a truth which ought to be ever dear to the Christian's heart, that modern freedom was born in the Christian church.

At that moment, ancient freedom was dead. It lay buried in the graves of Brutus and Cato and their brother patriots. It received its mortal wound when Cæsar passed the Rubicon. It fell on the plains of Pharsalia, and it expired when the Roman Senate ceased to speak the sentiments of a magnanimous people. And it seems impossible to conjecture where it would ever have sprung up again, had its elements not existed in the Christian church. There was no hope for it under the old civilization, and when that died out, the new forms of society,

which arose in Modern Europe, were the most uncongenial soil that could possibly be conceived. The whole surface of the earth was apportioned out to military chiefs, who by the strong arm of power, kept the masses in the abjectest bondage. This tyranny was perpetuated by the right of primogeniture, and had it not been for the existence of Christianity, the world would have presented the prospect of countless ages of gloomy and unmitigated oppression. There was but one institution which presented an exception to this hideous inequality of human condition. It was the Church of Christ. There might be seen, kneeling side by side, the mailed baron and the lowliest serf, the proprietor of provinces and the trembling tenant of his humblest shed. The Church alone asserted the absolute equality of all men before God. She invited into her seats of learning, alike, the child of the noble, and the son of the labourer, and her honours and her dignities were equally open to the offspring of the peasant and the heir of generations of princes. And it was there, doubtless, in those solemn hours of prostration before God, that the great conceptions of human equality and brotherhood were once more generated, which were the germs of all the social and political reforms, which men for the last three hundred years have been struggling to realize. The Protestant could not but sigh for a better state of things when he saw what he thought vital truth, crushed and disabled by unjust political institutions; and the Catholic felt no less indignant, when he saw the civil government turn and demolish institutions which it had upheld for ages, and which he regarded as embodying all that was most precious in practical utility, and all that was most sacred by traditionary veneration. All sighed alike to lead forth the Church from the land of oppression and the house of bondage, to a better country and a happier home.

The Puritans, when they sailed for New England, and the Catholic Calvert, when he landed on the shores of the Potomac, bearing with him the first social compact that was ever framed on earth, which carried out the Christian idea of the severance of Church and State, and provided for entire and absolute religious liberty, were animated by the same pure aspiration to realize a more perfect development of humanity than the world had ever seen. Was the hand of Providence ever more visible than in *reserving* this vacant spot for the last grand experiment of the human race? The Maryland colony actually brought with them a provision in their charter for the erection of baronies, like those of the old world, and of course for the creation and entailment of immense landed estates, and a hereditary aristocracy. But an overruling Providence did not permit such institutions to take root in a soil, which he had destined to other purposes. The Church came over into the colony of Virginia, trammelled by the patronage of the State, and the wrecks of that connexion are now scattered over the surface of that wide dominion.

A century and a half of substantial freedom, trained up a new race of human beings, different, in many important particulars, from any thing that had ever been known before, and prepared them to run a career as novel as the circumstances under which they were placed.

The convocation, which formed the American Constitution, were unconsciously doing the most important work that was ever done by uninspired man. It was theirs to embody in a written constitution, and make real, practical and effectual for the future millions of the Western Continent, the blood-bought wisdom of the ages, the generations and the races which had gone before. They had before them the records of Grecian freedom, of Roman jurisprudence, of Saxon society, and Hebrew reli-

gion. There, too, in the same records, were the abuses of them all. It was theirs to select and combine the good of all, and to exclude, as far as possible, the evils with which it had been mingled. Wiser men never lived. Truer patriots were never present at laying the corner stone of a nation's existence. They need no other monument than that immortal work. Ages will more and more reveal the profundity of its wisdom; and if the world is to be progressive, that constitution, we believe, is to be the Gospel of its political redemption. It combines the political reforms of Judaism and Christianity, the severance of the magistrate and priest, and the entire separation of Church and State, with the abolition of all the unjust and artificial distinctions of primogeniture and hereditary legislation, which grew up in the dark ages. It vests the supreme power in *the people*, in a form in which they can always use it for their own good. It does not propose itself either, with the arrogance of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which could not change, as if it had reached the last results of human wisdom, thus to stunt instead of aiding the growth of humanity, but reserves to itself the provident right of change and amendment, that it may adapt itself to higher and more perfect developments of society and the race, if any such shall be revealed.

And so far it works well. No half century that has ever passed over the earth, has ever witnessed such advancement and prosperity, as the last fifty years has witnessed in this country. Three millions of people have increased to twenty, and yet their expansion has scarcely begun. Those twenty millions have more cultivation, and more physical comfort than any twenty millions of human beings ever possessed before. And what more can we want? "Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name, and forget not all his benefits."

Cheered by the experience of the past, we have abundant ground for hope for the future. Is there any thing which threatens to bring the career of our prosperity to a close? We are sometimes assailed by the voices of apprehension and alarm. It is said, that the Church, deprived of the support of the State, is falling to pieces, is splitting up into a thousand fragments. Say rather, that it is approaching nearer to unity than it has done since the days of the Apostles. It would be nearer the truth, to say, that under the auspices of entire freedom, the kingdom of Christ is becoming spiritual, as it was first designed to be, and *therefore* outward organizations are becoming every day of less consequence. The followers of Christ are finding out the deep meaning of the words of J  sus, when he said, "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, *and all ye are brethren.*" Those who are disposed to look with astonishment and indignation at the present and approaching state of things, should calmly reflect, that the age of Church dignitaries is past. The world has got beyond them. There was a period, when the administration of religion consisted in sacrifices, in rites and ceremonies. Then was the age of the priest. He was the impersonation of religion. He symbolized it at the altar, and carried it painted on his robes. He addressed the senses of mankind. Now the masses read and think. He must lay aside his robes, and address their understandings. Even the bishop finds himself born an age too late. He flourished in the days of authority. But the days of authority too, are gone, and the bishop finds himself reduced to a travelling agent. His authority is the mere shadow of a shade, and he finds every clergyman he visits, in all but the name, just as good a bishop as himself. He discovers himself living in an age of conviction, and not of authority; and conviction is produced by the force of mind, and not by the glitter

of garments of any colour or dimensions. Power in the Church is no longer official, but spiritual and intellectual. The true bishop is he, who gives utterance, in clearest and deepest tones, to the truth as it is in Jesus; who has penetrated farthest into the Spirit of Christ; who preaches most like his Master, that eternal Word which shall stand till heaven and earth shall pass away.

In an intellectual and spiritual age, all church offices merge necessarily in the Teacher. Once there was an order of deacons, who had the care of the poor. But the State was then heathen, and the poor were left to perish. Now the State is Christian, the poor are provided for, and the deacon's office has become defunct. The Sunday-school teacher has become a more important personage than the wearer of the mitre.

In such an age as this, ecclesiastical organization must necessarily go to decay; every congregation is becoming, as it was at first, essentially independent. The walls which divide different sects, must inevitably crumble, for as knowledge becomes diffused, the things in which they differ from each other, will daily diminish in importance, till they fall into entire neglect. And the Church, so far from losing any thing by this change, will shine with new brightness, and rule with deeper and wider power.

But our ears are assailed by the voice of alarm from another quarter. The balance of our constitution, it is said, is struck in favor of the democratic element, and that element, continually gaining in strength, threatens to work an overthrow of the structure. If this be so, all that can be said is, that the wit of man has never made any thing perfect, has never constructed any constitution so exactly poised, as to run on forever level, and neither side overtop or crush the other. If it is so, how much better that the balance *should* have been struck on the side of popular liberty, than the other; that there should

be a power in numbers to counterbalance the overwhelming force of wealth and privilege, which have kept the world so long enslaved. As evidence of this preponderance of the unreflecting masses, it is urged, that the people of this nation have rejected as their chief magistrate, the ablest and most distinguished statesman in it, and chosen a man of inferior abilities and experience, scarcely, indeed, known to themselves. If this be a fact, it may be answered, that it is by no means conclusive. It may be, that that great man *has been* presiding, in some sort, over his country for the last forty years. This is the age of mind, not of office. Our true sovereigns are not those who sit in the chair of state, but those who think most deeply, reason most conclusively, and express themselves most eloquently; not those who *execute*, but those who *form* public opinion. If that eminent man had spoken the true sentiments of his country, he would have been placed at its head. If he did not speak them, he could have done nothing if he had been placed there. "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." The theory of our government is, that the voice of the people is the voice of God. We must believe, that the people have obeyed some higher instinct, than a merely human wisdom, in choosing the instrument of fulfilling their wishes. We must believe, that He, in whose sight all nations are but as a drop of the bucket, and who holdeth the hearts of all men, as it were, in the hollow of his hand, has purposes to answer, of which we, short-sighted mortals, can have no conception, in bringing about a result so unexpected to all.

Such is the construction which we are disposed to put upon late events. And if it is *not* so, and the voice of the people is *not* the voice of God, there is no immediate remedy. The voice of the people is the voice by which

we have stipulated to be governed, and we must be true to our principles and abide the issue.

And this leads me to speak of our duties. If the voice of the people is *not* the voice of God, we must endeavour, since we are to be governed by it, to *make* it the voice of God by educating intellectually, morally, and religiously those who utter it. If we cannot trust to humanity in the aggregate, to what portion of it can we trust? We have chosen our sovereign, and as we must obey him, so it is most fortunate that we can educate him. If he be fierce and wilful and ignorant, we know the discipline by which he may be made wise, and gentle, and humane.

The masses **MUST** be educated. This is the great business of the patriot and philanthropist. If they be *not* educated, the constitution may be overturned in another way, and power again come into the hands of the few, and of the few who have the least stake in the welfare of the Republic. The voice of the people, when honestly dealt with, we religiously believe to be the voice of God. But the danger is, that the voice we hear, is not the voice of the people, but the voice which the people's leaders contrive to speak through their organs, through their lungs, and not through their minds. The voice of the people must be the voice of independent intellect, and not the hollow sound which comes from the machinery of an automaton.

A republican government is founded on the postulate, that there may be in the mass of the citizens, sufficient intelligence and virtue, to make wise laws, and execute them faithfully. But this same postulate supposes, that the very existence of a Republic is only conditional. Without this intelligence and virtue, we have the form but not the thing. In establishing a republican government, power is taken from the hands of the few, and put into the hands of the many. However intrinsically unjust it might have been, that power should have been in the

hands of the few, society, in that case, has this security for its legitimate exercise, that it is possessed by those who have the deepest interest in the public welfare, and of those to whom office for its own sake is of the least importance. Such men obtain office with the fewest pledges of a questionable character, and may therefore be more untrammelled in its exercise.

But power, having been returned to the people, before it can be exercised, must be put again into the hands of the few. Into whose hands shall it be given? If the people are intelligent and virtuous, into the hands of the wisest and most substantial men in the community. If this were always the case, then a Republic, like our own, would be the very ideal of a perfect government. But it is very possible, that a very different order of things may take place. Office and power may, and do, become objects of cupidity, not to be spontaneously conferred by the people on their wisest and best, but to be sought and compassed by the ambitious and cunning, through party management and organization. The enquiry with such men is, not what is true and right, but what the people can be made to believe. There are few things which are found to have a worse influence upon the character than to embark in partizan politics. It soon unmoors a man from every obligation of moral principle, and sets him completely afloat. He becomes so accustomed to shape his course by expediency instead of truth, that truth becomes altogether a secondary consideration. His feelings and his judgment have become so warped by antagonism and opposition, that he is incapable of viewing any subject with impartiality. If he has a desire to be honest himself, he is so often compelled to acquiesce in that which is wrong, that his integrity is gradually undermined.

Under the management of such men, the elective franchise is *not* the free and spontaneous expression of the

popular will. It is the machinery by which a few designing men elevate themselves to office. When this is accomplished, then power has come round and made a complete circle. It has got again into the hands of a few. It has been taken from the aristocracy of wealth, only to be put in the hands of an oligarchy of political adventurers, a condition of things just as odious as the other. Forms of government are nothing. The spirit may perish, while the outward organization remains the same. The government of a deluded or intimidated multitude, is the worst government in the world. Augustus Cæsar, when he reigned absolute at Rome, was seen to go through the forms of a popular election. He put on the white gown of a candidate, and went round among the people, soliciting their votes for the office of consul.

An unintelligent vote, or a vote obtained by misrepresentation, is *not* a vote, in the spirit of a free government. And I look upon it as a crime of a dark dye, to obtain a vote in such a manner. And here is the point, where our institutions are in the greatest danger. On this point, turns the whole question of the practicability of a republican government. Can the masses be made and kept so intelligent and virtuous, as to give an intelligent and honest suffrage? If they can, then the people can govern themselves. If they cannot, then they will be governed, through their passions and prejudices, by a few for their own purposes. If such a state of culture is possible, then a Republic will succeed, and next to Christianity, be the greatest blessing that God ever bestowed on man.

If the mass of the people cannot be so educated as to discriminate, in those who solicit their suffrages, between the patriot and the office-seeker, then they must be content to see each successive administration settle down upon the body politic like a swarm of hungry insects, whose

first object will be to satisfy the cravings of their own appetites. If the people cannot be so educated as to have a mind and will of their own, they must be satisfied to be, as they have been under every other form of government, the servants of their servants. The two great parties, into which Providence decrees that every free state shall be divided, will find themselves to be used very much as the masses of two neighbouring kingdoms in the old world are, to fight against each other, for the power and profit of those who gather the spoils of victory.

But we hear from some quarters the desponding prediction, that the masses never *CAN* be so educated as to act intelligently on the great questions of national policy. If it be so, then the last hope of man is flat despair. But it is *not* so. The masses *are* being educated with inconceivable rapidity. The very violence of political excitement is educating them. Passion, after all, is the great stimulus of the intellect. It rouses the mind from the dead stagnation of indifference, and from the stupifying routine of incessant toil. In the violence of party strife, men listen and read and think, who never thought before. They come out of the holes and corners, where they vegetated and slept, and catch some rays of heaven's light, though it be through cloud and storm.

Those immense assemblages which have darkened our streets, and rent the air with shouts and confusion, have seemed to some as black clouds, lowering with ill omen upon our prospects. I read them differently. I interpret them as vast conventions, come together to promote the political education of the people. Grant that they listen to much that is false, they must hear also much that is true. Assuming the natural rectitude of the human mind, and all popular institutions take it for granted, the truth will be embraced, and the falsehood rejected. So many speakers, so many independent, well informed minds,

cannot fail to place every subject in every possible light, and to obtain something approaching a true verdict from that inspiration which giveth every man understanding.

Doubts have been cast upon the ultimate utility of the press itself. It may be, it is said, the vehicle of truth, and it may be the engine of misrepresentation. We grant it. But we affirm likewise, that this one engine makes all the difference between a civilized and a barbarous people, all the difference between absolute rule and self-government, all the difference between freemen and slaves. Grant that the press sometimes misleads the people, and betrays them to misjudge their true interest. It leads them at least, to *exercise* their judgment, even if it leads them to judge wrong. That misjudgment is but a slight loss in comparison with the immense boon of having led them to use their judgments and their minds at all. The next time, they may judge rightly, and perhaps ever after, for no man ever chooses to be deceived.

From the considerations we have now brought into view, we infer, that the first duty of an American citizen is to lend all his energies to the great purpose of educating the masses, intellectually, morally, religiously. By this transforming process, the child of the rudest emigrant shall be prepared in a few years, to enjoy and perpetuate our noble institutions. The school-house and the church, these are the hope of the Republic. Let them rise in every valley, and upon every plain, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains. In them are formed the minds which are to control the destinies of this mighty and growing nation. And let the patriot who is disposed to despond, console the hours of his saddest reflection, with the thought, that the rising millions of his countrymen *are now actually receiving* such an education as was never bestowed on an equal number of the human race, that the simple power of reading, now conferred on all, unlocks to

them treasures of wisdom and feeling and thought, embodied in the literature of their mother tongue, such as were denied the sages of antiquity.

And when the Sabbath spreads its stillness over the land, let him consider how many millions of the future arbiters of his country's destiny, are gathered into the house of God, and sitting at the feet of Jesus, there learning to choose the thing that is good, as well as know the thing that is true and right. New hope will be kindled in his bosom. Brighter visions of glory and happiness will rise in the prospects of his country. He will believe that the blood and tears of fifty centuries have not been shed to no purpose, that sages have not thought, nor philanthropists laboured, nor martyrs bled in vain, but that all the wise institutions of the past are to pour their mingled streams of blessings upon the heritage of his people. He will thank God, that his eyes behold, his ears hear, and his soul enjoys, what kings and prophets and righteous men desired to see, but died without the sight.

The last duty which I would inculcate upon the American citizen, is fidelity to the constitution. The conjuncture of circumstances, which rendered such a constitution possible, is one which does not occur once in a thousand years. Its formation and actual establishment, is one of the greatest events in the history of mankind. Such an achievement was an epoch in the annals of the world. To compare temporal things with spiritual, it bears the same relation to the political prospects of the race, which the establishment of the nation of Israel in the Holy Land, did to the religious regeneration of mankind. The bond of their union and their national existence, was fidelity to their constitution, the fundamental article of which was, the worship of the one true God. He, who forsook him, and undertook to set up any other altar, was not only an apostate in religion, but a traitor to his country. He was

doing what he could, to extinguish the only light of true religion in the world. And how was he to be treated? Let us read. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, *or the wife of thy bosom*, or thy friend *which is as thy thine own soul*, entice thee secretly, saying: Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers," "thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die, because he hath thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear and fear, and do no more any such wickedness as this is, among you." And why this awful severity against the traitor to the Jewish constitution? Because the world had a stake in it. Because apostasy from the true religion went just so far to destroy the only hope of the religious regeneration of the world.

If all is true, which I have said of the constitution of our government, and its importance to the world, scarcely less is his guilt, who whispers such a thought as the dissolution of the union of these States, even to the wife of his bosom. He is taking the first step to overthrow the ultimate hope of man. "Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor *hearken* unto him." He is doing what he can to make abortive the centuries of suffering, through which the human race has passed, and to plunge in anarchy and blood a nation, which through the good providence of God, has escaped from the bondage of Egypt. He says to the loyal subjects of our glorious constitution: Go, serve other gods, which neither we nor our fathers have known. Go, try new experiments

in government, which have never been known, or if known, tried only to be execrated and abandoned.

And yet God's people were at length divided. Ten tribes did abandon the religion and the institutions of their fathers, they did forsake Jerusalem and its temple, and build for themselves other altars, in Bethel and in Dan. They set up a golden calf in opposition to the God of Israel. And what was the consequence? Disorder, anarchy, vice, misery, ruin, captivity, utter annihilation; so that their very name has perished from among men. Such would be their fate, I religiously believe, who should attempt to build any other altar, or raise any other standard than that which has floated, for more than half a century, over this land of the free, and borne our name and our honor to the remotest nations of the globe. The sin of the man who should undertake to do this, would stand out in the history of the world with the same prominence of atrocity, as the sin of Jeroboam in the history of God's chosen people, who introduced **DIVISION** into the sacred tribes, led ten of them away to idolatry and destruction, and therefore his name is consigned to perpetual reproach.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

Dedication of the Unitarian Church,

IN WHEELING, VA.

ON THE EVENING OF THE 15 MAY, 1852,

BY

Washington

REV. GEORGE W. BURNAP, D. D.

Pastor of the First Independent Church of Baltimore.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY.

1852.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

JOHN xvi. 23, 24.—And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

WE are assembled to dedicate this house to the purposes of Christian Worship. To those by whose zeal, enterprise and self-sacrifice it has been erected, I offer my heartfelt congratulations. I can appreciate the deep emotion with which you unite in the services of this evening. It celebrates the consummation of a long cherished hope. It reduces to sober certainty the satisfaction of one of the deepest wants of the human soul, to have a house of prayer, a place where we may worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, with none to molest or make us afraid.

Worship is a universal necessity. The Pagan feels it, when he goes into the temple of his idols and bows down before a stock or a stone. The Savage feels it, when he glides along the dark waters under some lofty precipice, and feels his heart bowed by the mysterious presence of the unknown God. The Christian feels it, when he advances beyond the farthest wave of population and begins a settlement in the wilderness, and almost before he has hewn out

a habitation for himself, he begins to build a house for God. David felt it, when God had given him rest on every side and crowned his reign with large prosperity; and he reflected that while he was surrounded with splendor and luxury, the sacred ark and God's holy altar, rested beneath the frail covering of a tent. In the plenitude of his zeal, "he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob. Surely I will not come unto the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed, I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

We all need a place where we may come, and in silence and seclusion lift up our hearts to God. We feel that we are made for something better than mere worldliness and perpetual toil. We have an instinctive conviction that there is a Father of our spirits, as well as a Former of our bodies. We would testify by some outward act, that we are not unawed by that Majesty which sits enthroned amid the splendors of the universe, that we are not unobservant of that Wisdom which guides the changes of this stupendous world aright,—that our hearts are not untouched by that Benignity, which makes all the riches of creation the heritage of man. We desire sometimes to withdraw from the world, that by meditation and prayer we may add strength to our faith, that by the inward eye we may learn to see him who is invisible. There are times when we would seek sanctuary from the troubles of this life. They sometimes thicken over us till they form a cloud so dark, as to shut out the

face of our heavenly Father. The afflictions of life become a mystery too deep for our solution, until like the Psalmist, we go to the sanctuary of God. There light breaks in upon our darkened minds; there peace comes over our troubled spirits, and we learn serenely to trust to the kindness of that Father, whose chastisements we cannot comprehend.

But our spiritual wants are not all satisfied when we have provided a house of prayer. We need, likewise, *instruction in sacred things*. The temple at Jerusalem, under the old dispensation, was a house of prayer. As mind became developed, a want was felt of religious instruction; and synagogues were built in every village. In the synagogue Jesus began his mission as the "Light of the world," as the teacher of mankind. When the Christian church was organized, the two objects were combined in the temples of Christian worship. Devotion and instruction were united, and the successors of the Apostles are the organ of bearing to heaven the prayers of the saints and dispensing the truths of the everlasting Gospel. Thus all the spiritual wants of the soul are satisfied, and all is done that can be to keep alive the fire of piety on the altar of the heart, and to guide the feet in the path of duty. Men do not judge amiss when they estimate above all price the privilege of Christian worship and instruction. They feel that it is worth almost any sacrifice, and without it, life wants one of its highest ornaments and richest consolations.

Our care to have a place of worship ceases not with ourselves. It descends to those who are training up with us, and who are to come after us. The

most powerful aid which the parent receives in educating his children to virtue, piety and usefulness, is in the weekly services of the sanctuary. Here the divine doctrine drops as the rain and distils as the dew, and here the Lord commands his blessing, even life forever more. It is here in the temples of Christian worship that the sure foundation is laid for private virtue and public prosperity, for the welfare of families and the safety of nations. Here souls are born anew into the kingdom of heaven, begotten by that incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

But there are probably some here present, who may be disposed to call in question the doings of this day, who may be disposed to ask us why we have built this house. Was there not room enough in the churches already built? Why not worship at the altars already established? I bespeak your candid attention, while I attempt in all plainness and simplicity to answer these questions.

We have built this church in order to establish in it what we deem to be *Christian worship*. It is, as we think, the worship of the one only living and true God, in the name of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. We have established this church because we believe that there is but ONE Object of worship, one individual Being in the universe, to whom it is lawful to pray. In any other church in this city, we are called upon to pray to *more* than one Object of worship. We sometimes go to such churches. We have a sincere respect for the piety and devotion we find there. When they pray, as they do for the most part, to the

one Object of worship, the only living and true God, we join heartily in their devotions. But when they pray to the Virgin Mary, or to Christ, or to the Holy Ghost, we cannot join them, our devotional feelings are disturbed, our sensibilities are shocked, our edification is obstructed.

Our Catholic brethren consider themselves justified in praying to the Virgin Mary. Nay, they feel themselves bound to do it. We do not doubt either their sincerity or their conscientiousness. We do not doubt even the fervor of their prayers, which they daily pour out with full hearts to the mother of Christ, whom they likewise call the mother of God. They plead for it the authority and the usage of the Catholic church for more than a thousand years. Thousands and millions of pious hearts had prayed to the Virgin. Indeed, the custom was universal before the Reformation.

Not only are custom and authority pleaded for this practice, but reason and sentiment are appealed to in its defence. It is said, that God is too pure and exalted a being to be approached by such sinners as we. It is presumption in us, polluted as we are, to address ourselves immediately to a holy God. How can a Being of infinite perfection sympathize with us in our weakness, our ignorance, our temptations? But a mother's heart is all tenderness and compassion. We fly to it with the fullest and most unlimited confidence.

To all such reasoning we answer, that such worship is plainly forbidden by the sacred Scriptures, which are our supreme law of faith and practice.

The first and fundamental commandment of the Jewish decalogue was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." Christ recognized and perpetuated the same fundamental principle in the new dispensation. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve."

There is, and there can be, but one Object of worship in the universe. Worship is founded on the nature of the Being or Person worshipped, and his relations to the being who pays the worship. We worship God because he is the Creator and Governor of the universe. There is but *one* Creator and Governor of the universe. We worship God because he is the Former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits. We worship him because he is omniscient and omnipresent; because we depend on him every moment for life and breath and all things. He is able to do for us any thing that we ask. No other being possesses these attributes, or sustains these relations, and therefore, in our judgment, it is not only irreligious, but absurd for us to pray to any other being.

With these convictions, we are virtually shut out of the Catholic church by the very form of worship which prevails there. We cannot say in the words of Christ, "Our Father who art in heaven," and in the next breath, "Hail Mary, mother of God." Therefore we build a church in which we may worship the only living and true God, without any admixture with the creatures which he has made.

For nearly the same reason, we are excluded from the worship of the Episcopal church. In their

printed form, which is used every Sunday, and in which the whole congregation is supposed to join, we find such an expression as this: "O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." To our minds such a form of worship is wholly unauthorized. There is no such God revealed to us in the Bible as God the Holy Ghost. There is no such phrase to be found in the whole compass of divine revelation. The very language is a human invention, which had no existence till ages after the Scriptures were completed. "God the Holy Ghost," must be either the same identical Being who is named in the same prayer as "God the Father," or he is a different Being. If he is the same, then it is the worship of the same God under another name, and of course is a needless repetition. If it is another being, then we are expressly forbidden to worship him by the prohibition, "Thou shalt not have any *other* gods before me."

But the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, was known to the writers both of the Old Testament and the New ; yet there is no intimation, either in the Old Testament or the New, that the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit is an Object of prayer. There is no recorded instance in the Bible, of any person, Jew or Christian, worshipping the Holy Ghost. We have many prayers of the saints of the Mosaic dispensation recorded in the Bible, but never one instance of prayer to the Holy Ghost. Christ often prayed, but never to the Holy Ghost. He gave his disciples a form of prayer, yet no mention was made in it of the Holy Ghost. We have no record of any such form

of devotion until ages after the time of Christ and his Apostles.

Not only so, we have abundant evidence that the Holy Ghost is not only not an object of worship, but not even a person. The Holy Ghost is synonymous with the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is expressly said to bear the same relation to God, which the spirit of man does to man. Says the Apostle Paul, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God."

Such being the case, we hold it to be presumptuous for any man, or body of men, to draw up or adopt a form of worship for which no scriptural example or authority can be alleged. We say with the deepest sincerity and the profoundest conviction, that it is in violation of the letter and the spirit of the New Testament, and has the effect to drive away from God's altars those who wish to adhere to his holy word.

In the same form of prayer, which is intended to be repeated by the whole congregation, we have the following petition: "O holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three persons, and one God, have mercy on us miserable sinners." How is it possible for any human mind to join intelligently in such a petition as this? To worship a being, he must form some idea of that being. God has been pleased to reveal himself to us under human analogies, as *a person*, in the same sense that man is a person, as one intelligence, one consciousness, one will. We know what unity and personality are, from our own consciousness.

Each one of us conscious to himself of being one person, one mind, one intelligence, one will. We conceive of any other human being as having the same individuality. We address ourselves to every human being as possessing this individuality. All language is constructed with reference to this unity and individuality. We say, I, thou, he. There could not be conceived a greater absurdity than to say of any human being that he is three persons and one man.

God having represented himself as subsisting in one person, and always speaking of himself as a person, all prayer was directed to him, under the light of revelation as a person, and as one person. The Psalms contain the devotions of the people of God for many centuries. They are all addressed to God as a person, and as *one* person. We have the form of dedication, which was used by Solomon in the consecration of the first temple built on earth for the worship of the true God. And it commences, "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like unto *thee*, in heaven above nor on earth beneath." By the use of the pronoun *thee*, it is evident that Solomon conceived of God as subsisting in one person. So in the New Testament. In that form of prayer which Christ has given us, we are taught to say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be *thy* name, *thy* kingdom come, *thy* will be done." Over and over again in this short formula are we taught to pray to God, not only as one being, but as *one person*, and we are taught that God subsists in one person.

But in the form of worship to which I have alluded, we are required to say, "O holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, *three* persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." Not only is this formula wholly unjustified by the Scriptures, but the object of worship which it presents, is *wholly inconceivable by the human mind*. God in one person, we can conceive of with nearly the same clearness that we can conceive of man as one person. Indeed, we have no difficulty, on that score, for we are expressly told, that God has made man after his own image. But when we are called upon to worship a Trinity, *three* persons and *one* God, our thoughts are confounded, our minds are plunged in total darkness. The very idea is monstrous, and leads the thoughts into utter confusion. This Trinity itself must be a person, or we can hold no intercourse with it. There follows then, the contradiction of worshipping three persons in one person, or the impossibility of worshipping one God in three persons. There have been ages when the occurrence of such prayers as these in the devotions of the Christian church would cause no offence, for there were few who had learned to analyze their own thoughts. Now, however, the case is different. It is the privilege of this age to understand what it reads, and the only way in which any person, who has thought upon the subject, can join in the prayers of the Episcopal church, is to pass over in silence and mental reservation that portion of the devotions addressed to the Trinity, three persons and one God.

The projectors of this church felt themselves constrained to devote a portion of their substance to this enterprise, because there was no church in this city in which, if they joined in the services, they would not find themselves called upon *to pray to Christ*, or to worship him as God. This they felt themselves forbidden to do by the most emphatic prohibitions. In the first place, they are *forbidden* to pray to Christ *by his own express and explicit commandment*. Not long before he left the world, as if anticipating the error into which his followers afterwards fell, he cautioned them on this very point. Here, if we may credit all history, was the beginning of idolatry, the deification of departed men. Men had been deified and worshipped, although their bodies remained on earth and their sepulchres were still seen among men. Jesus was to come back from the tomb and ascend in a bodily shape in the sight of men to heaven. He was in some sense to be with his Apostles and his church forever. He was, in his own words, to ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. And in that high state of exaltation, were they not to be permitted to address themselves to him, to pray to him? O no! Not one word of prayer was to be breathed to him forever. “*In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will give it you.*” And no prayer has ever been addressed to Christ from that day to this, without a plain violation of this most explicit and peremptory commandment.

Time would fail me to enumerate the various modes in which ingenious and learned men have

attempted to evade or explain away the force of this categorical prohibition. The most plausible has been to affirm that the word which is rendered *ask*, means to *ask questions*, to make enquiries. But that subterfuge is refuted before the sentence is brought to a close. For the Saviour proceeds, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will *give* it you." If it were asking questions of which the Saviour was speaking, then the promise would have been, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my name, he will *tell* you, or *reveal* to you. But it is, "he will *give* it you," showing that it is not information, but *benefits* that they were to ask.

That we are right in this interpretation, appears from what immediately follows. "At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I *will pray the Father for you*, for the Father himself loveth you." The position which Christ here represents himself to occupy, when he should be exalted to heaven, is not to be an object of prayer, but to be a suppliant himself, and to intercede, if it were necessary, for his disciples, which he had left on earth. But he assured them, that such intercession would not be necessary, for God loved them without intercession, and would therefore be ready to grant them their reasonable requests.

Thus you perceive, that Christ first gives the emphatic prohibition, "Ye shall not pray to me when I am exalted to heaven," and then gives the reason for it. "I shall not occupy the position of your God, but of your intercessor with God. And such inter-

cession will not be necessary, for God himself loveth you."

This discourse ends in a prayer, which accumulates reasons why we should not pray to Christ. In the first place Christ prays to the Father as *the only true God*, and speaks of himself wholly distinct from the only true God. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God *and* Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Here he carefully distinguishes himself from the only true God, and he himself prays to that only true God.

In the course of the same prayer, he denies to himself those attributes which alone could constitute him a proper object of prayer. "And now *I am no more in the world*, but these are in the world, and *I come to thee*. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." Is this the language of a being omnipresent and omnipotent, as that being must be, who is a proper object of prayer? Still stronger is another expression in the same prayer. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, *be with me where I am*." Does this confinement to a definite locality, and this request that his disciples may be with him, and all of course at the disposal of another, correspond with the attributes of a being who is omnipresent, and is to be addressed in prayer by thousands and thousands at the same moment?

But this, it may be said, Christ spoke in and of his human nature. It is confessed on all hands, that it would be idolatry to worship Christ's human nature. It is only his divine nature to which we pray.

But let us enter a Presbyterian church, and if we join in the service, what are we called upon to do? We are called upon to pray to Christ as one of the persons of the Trinity. And of what is that person composed? We are told in the answer to the twenty-first question of the Shorter Catechism, which is the recognized standard of faith and worship in that church, "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continueth to be *God and man*, in two distinct natures, and *one person* forever."

Now how is it possible, if the human and divine natures are so intimately united and go to constitute the person of Christ, and that person is one of the persons of the Trinity, to pray to that person without praying to the human nature?

That the human nature *is* made an object of worship, we have abundance of evidence. In the hymns of Watts, which are extensively used in all the orthodox churches, we have a representation of heaven, scenic it is true, and poetic in its character, but carrying out the theological conceptions of the divines of Westminster.

"O for a sight, a pleasing sight,
Of our Almighty Father's throne:
There sits our Saviour crowned with light,
Clothed with a body like our own.

"Adoring saints around him stand,
And thrones and powers before him fall;
The God shines gracious *through the man*,
And sheds sweet glories on them all."

How is it possible for the human mind to separate the one from the other, even in thought, if the God shines through the man?

That the distinction is *not* made, that the man is not separated from the God, but on the contrary, that the mind fixes itself on the human relations, acts and attributes of this composite person, we have the evidence of the Episcopal liturgy. In that the worshipper is made to say: "By the mystery of thy holy incarnation,—by thy holy nativity and circumcision,—by thy baptism, fasting and temptation,—by thine agony and bloody sweat,—by thy cross and passion,—by thy precious death and burial,—by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, good Lord deliver us."

The circumcision of God! No sane man can conceive such an idea. It must be the human nature which the worshipper has in his mind, when he utters such language as this.

When I hear these appalling words in a church, or read them in a book in the middle of this nineteenth century, I am overwhelmed with astonishment and sadness. It sometimes seems to me, that the pagan perversions of Christianity, which it suffered in passing through the dark ages, had so transformed it, that it became a positive *corruption* of the pure and sublime Monotheism of Moses and the prophets. What a falling off from the simple teaching of Jesus Christ! "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." What a declension from the apostolic doxologies! "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." "The

blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light to which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."

In the place of this unauthorized worship of Christ as God, we have raised up this church for the worship of God, *in the name of Christ*. By doing so we conceive that we conform most scrupulously to the requisitions of the New Testament and to the commands of Christ himself. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing, but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, *in my name*, he will give it you." By so doing we avoid the error and the sin of Polytheism, the offering up of petitions to more than one object of worship. We put the proper distinction between the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. We place Christ in the position which is claimed for him in the New Testament, not as God, but as the Mediator. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." We acknowledge his mediation, the relation he is made to sustain to God on the one hand, and to man on the other. We acknowledge our faith in his mission. We acknowledge that through him, God has made himself known to us as we never could have known him in any other way. In his words and works we see the Father. He comes near to us, and through Christ, as it were, we hold communication with God. He is God's incarnate Word. The Father dwelt in him, as it were a tabernacle. He was one with the Father, by the unity of agency. He was the shep-

herd of God's sheep. None could pluck them out of his hands, because he acted for God. He was one with the Father, by the unity of affection and purpose, not of essence and consciousness, for he prayed that his disciples might be one as he and the Father were.

By him we are thus brought near to God. "He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by him." We acknowledge him as the Ambassador of God's mercy. His Gospel is the New Covenant of forgiveness, which he sealed with his blood, in which God stipulates to pardon the sins of the penitent believer.

We acknowledge him as "the Resurrection and the Life," as the Pledge and Surety of immortality to man. He has made what was before a dim probability to become to us an assured reality. "He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," so that we sorrow no longer for the departed as those who mourn without hope.

When we worship God in the name of Christ, we acknowledge his *Lordship*, that is his Divine authority. "To us there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ." He was exalted to that Lordship first *by Divine endowment*. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God *giveth not the spirit by measure unto him*." In the second place, he is exalted to that Lordship, *by the resurrection from the dead*. "God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." By raising him from the dead, God gave his sanction

to all that he had taught in the name of God. This is what we understand by the Oriental figure of being raised by the resurrection to God's right hand. *He was made the representative of his authority.* He is made head over all things to the church. He is exalted "above principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." This is the lordship "to which every knee shall bow, and which every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God the Father." When we thus honor Christ, we honor God who sent him, because God commands us to honor him as the representative of his authority. But were we to worship Christ as God, we should *dishonor* God who sent him, we should in fact dethrone God, treat him as if he were a nonentity, and substitute the Mediator in his place.

By thus honoring Christ as the Mediator, and praying in his name, we are separated from the Deists on the one hand, and the Trinitarians on the other. We are separated from the Deists, with whom we are studiously confounded, for they recognize no Mediator, and believe in no revelation. We are separated from the Trinitarians, inasmuch as they worship Christ as God, while we do not.

In thus establishing the worship of God in the name of Christ, we believe that we express the convictions of a large and growing portion of the Christian church, now connected with various denominations. The strict doctrine of the Trinity is fast becoming a dead letter. In this age, it is found, that it will bear neither exposition nor defence. It is safe

only so long as it is made a matter of tradition, and is handed down from generation to generation, unexamined, in catechisms, litanies and doxologies. Its most earnest opponents are often those who have converted themselves from belief in it by attempting its defence. There is a strong under-current of learning and culture, which is bearing the human mind away from this doctrine as a relic of other times. One hundred years ago, it was common for theologians to give long dialogues which took place between the persons of the Trinity before the creation of the world, and to state the terms of a covenant entered into by them as contracting parties for the future redemption of the elect. Now the dogma, in the hands of its ablest defenders, has faded out into *three distinctions in the divine nature*.

We believe that the time has now come to discard it altogether from Christian theology, or at least to build churches in which it shall be omitted from prayer and hymn, sermon and catechism. The cause of *faith* demands it. The time has been when it was comparatively harmless. It was passed over as a mystery, to be believed without being understood. The popular traditionary belief in Christianity was so strong, that its details were not examined, and faith was not staggered by mathematical contradictions, logical inconsistencies, and metaphysical impossibilities. Or, if there was here and there an enquirer who presumed to detect and expose them, there was sufficient church authority to stigmatize the enquirer as impious and suppress investigation as profane.

But times are now changed. The human mind has become active. Enquirers have multiplied. Doubt is now open. Unbelievers have increased till their name is now legion. They are armed with vast learning and mental acuteness. The advocates of Christianity can be successful only by defending what is defensible, and abandoning every thing that is unsound.

Nothing could benefit the cause of infidelity more than to fasten upon the Bible the doctrine of a tri-personal God, one person of which is Son to the other, and yet as ancient as his Father, the three persons of which each comprehend the whole of Deity, no more and no less, and yet are diverse, the one from the other. One of these persons is a compound being himself, being made up of a human soul, which began to exist about eighteen hundred years ago, and the Divine essence, which has existed from all eternity.

The cause of *piety* demands that the worship of three persons should be banished from the Christian church. There can be but one person who sustains to us the relation of God. Only one person can sustain to us the relation of Creator. That person is denominated in the Scriptures of the Old Testament Jehovah. The same person is our Preserver and Benefactor, is every thing to us that God can be. To him alone are due those sentiments in our hearts, which are denominated piety. We cannot exercise any sentiment of piety to Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost. The word piety does not apply to our rela-

tions to them. We are not commanded in the Scriptures to exercise piety towards them.

The word piety does not apply to our relation to Christ, for the simple reason that he does not sustain to us the relation of God. We cannot exercise *repentance* towards Christ. We are not commanded to do so. We are to exercise "repentance towards God, and *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ." God is our lawgiver, and he alone can forgive us. The faith that we are to cherish towards Christ, is not as God, the original lawgiver, but as the Sent of God, as his delegate and representative. We are commanded to love Christ, not because he is our God, but because he lived and taught, and suffered and died, to bring us to God, and God is the Being whom we must ultimately thank for what Christ has done for us.

Prayer is the chief means of the increase of piety. Our hearts are kindled to devotion, when we contemplate one Infinite and All-perfect Father of the universe, whose wisdom devised and whose power created this mighty system of things. We conceive of him as the Father of our spirits, the changeless source of spiritual being, from which we came and to which we tend, and we can worship him with the profoundest gratitude, and look up to him with unbounded confidence. But we are incapable of holding intercourse with a tri-personal God. We cannot even conceive of the possibility of his existence. Our minds are distracted, our faith is confounded, and devotion itself becomes the source of mental discord and contradiction, instead of the cause of tranquility, peace and consolation. We know not

what we worship until we worship God as one person, one mind, one intelligence, one God and Father of all.

For these causes, we solemnly dedicate this house to the worship of the only living and true God, in the name of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge him as the only proper Object of religious homage. We deny that it can be lawfully paid to any other. We acknowledge him as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the prophets, the God whom Christ worshipped, and to whom he taught his followers to pray, to whom he ascended after his resurrection, and whom he called his Father, and our Father, his God and our God.

We dedicate it to him, because he is the only Being and the only Person who sustains the relation of God to us; because it is in him we live and move and have our being. All that we are he has made us, all that we have he has given us, all that we can ever hope to receive must come from his infinite fullness. We dedicate it to that Being to whom our Saviour taught us to pray as our Father in heaven, because we have no assurance that any other being or person can hear us or answer our prayers, and because it would be a derogation from his sole Deity and Infinite Majesty to pray to any other object.

We dedicate it in the name of Jesus Christ, because we would acknowledge before God and before the world, our faith in Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between God and men, as the Messiah, the Anointed One, whom God filled with his wisdom and clothed with his power, and endowed

with every attribute which was necessary to constitute him the all-sufficient Saviour of the world. We consecrate this church to the teaching of his most holy Gospel, as our sufficient rule of faith and practice, hoping that thus "he of God may be made unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification."

On this altar may the fire of true devotion be kindled, and never suffered to go out. From this sanctuary may the sacrifice of prayer come up acceptably before God. Here, from pure lips, may that word of God go forth which never returneth to him void. Here may there be planted that tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nation. Here may it be known that the fountain of living water is opened by the living verdure of true piety which shall spring up and spread around it. Here, with a true zeal and holy purpose, may parents consecrate their children to God. Here, with reverent, penitent and obedient hearts, may the followers of Christ surround the emblems of his dying love, and grow into his likeness, while they meditate upon his teaching, his sufferings and his death.

Here may successive generations come up from the toil and dust of this world to sit with Christ in heavenly places, and lift their thoughts and aspirations to the celestial mansions, and as slow revolving years undermine the foundation of this earthly tabernacle, fix their hearts and their hopes on that better habitation, that house of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens. **AMEN.**

THE PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES OF THE AMERICAN MIND.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

UNION PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

OF

DICKINSON COLLEGE,

JULY 7TH, 1852,

BY ^{Washington}GEORGE W. BURNAP.

BALTIMORE:
PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY.

1852.

CARLISLE, *July 8, 1852.*

REV. G. W. BURNAP:

DEAR SIR,—The undersigned a committee of the General Union Philosophical Society, would offer, on behalf of the Society, our thanks for your recent address,—and earnestly request a copy for publication.

Respectfully,

MONCURE D. CONWAY,
A. B. ANDERSON,
O. H. TIFFANY,
B. WAUGH,
G. W. MEDAIRY.

CARLISLE, *July 9, 1852.*

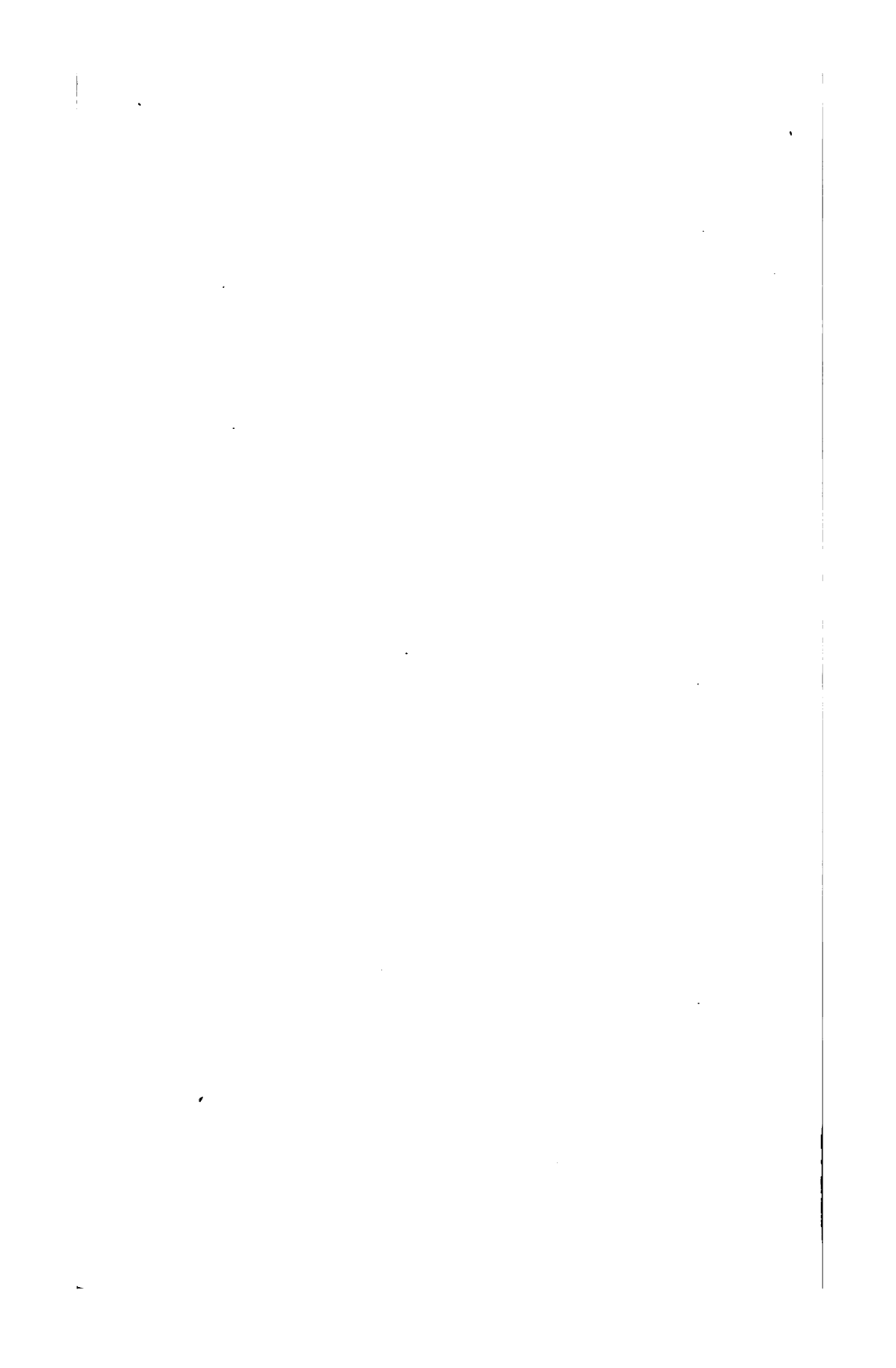
GENTLEMEN:

I submit the manuscript of my Address to your disposal, and hope that your Literary Association will receive it from the press with the same indulgence with which they listened to it when delivered.

I am, yours, respectfully,

GEORGE W. BURNAP.

Messrs. CONWAY, ANDERSON, TIFFANY, WAUGH AND MEDAIRY.



THE PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES OF THE AMERICAN MIND.

IN choosing a subject for your entertainment this evening, I have endeavored to select one which might mingle some degree of practical utility with literary exercise and intellectual speculation. I shall call your attention to a subject which ought to awaken an interest in our minds as patriots, as well as scholars, since in it, are in some measure involved the destinies of our country, the philosophical tendencies of the American mind.

By the use of this expression I do not mean to assert that we are a nation of philosophers, or overmuch given to philosophical speculation. But I do mean to say that nations, like individuals, have a peculiar bent of mind, usually impressed upon them at an early period, which in a great measure modifies and controls the development of their future character. We, Americans, have already some such characteristics, which make us to be what we are among the nations of the earth.

Among the myriads of the countenances of the human race, there are no two faces precisely alike,

although they all possess the same features and those features are very few. Some slight diversity of proportion creates the whole difference. There is the same diversity of minds and dispositions, and the cause is the same, diversity in the proportion of a few faculties which are common to all, or a difference of culture and development. Between nations there is the same difference, depending on precisely the same causes. Perpetuated from age to age, these national peculiarities become more and more intense, till at last they exert a powerful influence on a nation's destiny, for they determine at all times her settled policy, and often decide her fate on the greatest emergencies. Who can deny that it is only our peculiar national character, which has made us what we are? Other nations stimulated by our example, have attempted the same, but wholly without success.

Among the faculties which make the greatest difference among men, are the intuitive and the logical. By the intuitive faculty I mean that by which we recognise fundamental, primary and universal truths, such as that we are voluntary agents, that every effect must have a cause, that there must be a first cause, that there is such a distinction in human actions as right and wrong, that there are such things as truth, justice, honor, shame, that there are such universal emotions as are caused by beauty, sublimity, generosity. There are minds in which these intuitions predominate, and they make men poets, orators, reformers, likewise enthusiasts, theorists and dreamers.

By the logical faculty I mean that which enables and disposes a man to discover little differences in things which at first sight seem to be exactly alike, not only to determine that any effect has had a cause, but what that cause is, and of course, how the same effect may be reproduced by a repetition of the cause. Such a man is able to decide not only what is desirable, but what is practicable, and what means are necessary to bring it about. Of this constitution of mind are usually found to be statesmen, men of science, engineers, magistrates, successful mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, farmers, and among men of intellectual pursuits, theologians, metaphysicians and jurists.

Such a broad line is drawn by the predominance of these faculties, that the world may fairly be said to be divided between them. There is not, I venture to say, a person who hears me, that has not recognized this difference. The classes recognize and acknowledge each other. Their diversity of constitution leads them to regard almost every thing in opposite lights. So much is this the case, that they are scarcely ever just to each other. One brings forward a scheme of improvement or reform, and describes it in the most glowing language, and conceives concerning it the brightest hopes. The other too often, denounces it beforehand as impossible, chimerical, ridiculous, and the conference ends in the projector telling his auditor that he might as well talk to an iceberg. And yet, as we shall afterwards see, these two classes of men are necessary to

each other, and the world in its onward progress could not dispense with either.

These two parties mutually bring against each other the most atrocious accusations, and what is very remarkable, they accuse each other of many of the same things. Both are confident that the other's principles if carried out, would lead to Atheism in religion, and Skepticism in philosophy, and be most disastrous to society if carried into the common affairs of life. The man of intuition tells the man of logic, your ideas of causation have become so stringent and universal, that you make all events to be links in one chain, or meshes in a network of causes and effects, which runs back in unbroken continuity to the origin of all things. Not one link of this chain, not one mesh of this web could have been displaced or have occurred in any other part of the series, or failed to occur just as it did. God created the universe just as a mechanician does a clock, and having set it going has since become a mere spectator of the operation of his own work. Is not this view of things, it is asked, essentially atheistic and irreligious? To all practical purposes, there is no God. There was a God once, when he was free and was at liberty to govern the universe as he chose. But he has bound himself by his own laws, which have thus become a sort of overruling fate, sweeping on through the ages with inexorable and unalterable succession. What becomes of the duty and efficacy of prayer? What becomes of human responsibility? What becomes of the justice of the reproaches or the applause of our own consciences, when we have done that which we

felt to be wrong or right? If this theory be true, then all religion is at an end, and there is no longer any God to us.

But the man of logic brings charges quite as grave against the man of intuitions. You tell us, that the great ideas of God, duty and immortality are intuitions, or rather inspirations. They come immediately from God. The soul itself is a spark of the eternal, celestial fire. All its impulses come directly or indirectly from God. As God makes darkness as well as light, so he must create evil as well as good. Evil is only relative, and every thing is alike good in the sight of God. And so the intuitionist instead of shutting out the immediate agency of God from the universe, makes him the only real Agent in all things which take place. The system ends in broad Pantheism, and man himself, instead of being annihilated is deified, and the excesses of logic and intuition become identical in their last results.

A similar result takes place in regard to philosophical skepticism. Each complains of the other as throwing every thing into a state of doubt and uncertainty. The man of intuition proclaims, and it must be confessed with good reason, his utter distrust of all mere logical reasoning. Where was there ever an absurdity so glaring or a wrong so manifest, that it could not be, and has not been, defended by plausible and apparently logical argumentation? I must confess, for myself, though very far from belonging to the transcendental school, that this is precisely my experience. There is so much room for logical legerdemain, in dexterously substituting one term for

another, or in using the same term in different senses; there is so much opportunity for coloring and misrepresentation and of enlisting the feelings and prejudices where reason ought to reign alone, that I have sometimes been tempted to think that the forms of logic had as often been used to mislead men as to conduct them to the truth.

And then the intuitionist has a perfect right to say—Where is the authority of logic itself? Logic binds things together by a chain. But there must be some staple to which that chain must be fastened, or things are just as loose as before. That staple is always some intuitive truth, which it is equally impossible to prove and to call in question. If every thing is to be proved by deduction, where are we to begin? A certainty cannot be deduced from an uncertainty. All reasoning supposes that there are some things certain, independently of reasoning.

But here the man of logic catches the man of intuition in his own trap. He asks him what these fundamental and intuitive truths are? If they have so decided a mark on them as absolute and indisputable certainty, they may be ascertained, defined, enumerated, and set down in a catalogue.

But who ever saw this catalogue? Who drew it up, and who assented to it? That which is intuitively certain, must be the same every where, must be recognized every where. There can be no dispute about it. But where is the truth that has never been called in question? Until you can settle this matter, which are and which are not indisputable truths, it may happen, that when you have put out your cable

and moored yourself by the side of what you conceive to be an immovable rock, you discover that you are only fastened to a floating island, or perchance, like the voyager in Gulliver's travels, you discover that what you have taken for a rock is nothing other than the back of a whale, and you find when you next take your latitude and longitude, that you are drifting away to some Polar ocean where life becomes extinct, or some Maelstrom of danger where destruction is inevitable.

Quite as wide apart are these two classes of minds when they come into the sphere of practical life. We suppose them both to be good men, benevolent men, philanthropists; as such, they both wish the world progressive. They see that vast progress has already been made, that by industry, perseverance and self-sacrifice, enormous evils have been removed, which once bore heavily upon mankind. Why may not many of the evils which still afflict the race be likewise done away? The man of intuition indulges in glorious visions of the future. Governments exist for the benefit of the people. But what are they in fact? unjust, rapacious, tyrannical, selfish; they regard the people as existing for their pleasure and grandeur and profit. And what are the people? They are ignorant, degraded serfs and bondmen. Man is made for knowledge, freedom and culture. There must be a revolution at once. Prepared or unprepared, the masses must rise, buckle on their armour and establish a new order of things. But what if the enterprise fails, and it certainly will fail, if entrusted solely to the hands of enthusiasts. In the chances

of war, the better is not always the successful cause. If it fails, the masses are thrust down into a lower degradation than before, and they too often have reason to curse instead of blessing the memories of those who stirred them up to premature and disastrous insurrection.

The logical mind, on the contrary, does not often commit such mistakes. Its habit of investigating causes and effects, enables it to foresee all the difficulties which every enterprise will be compelled to encounter. It is therefore able to adapt means to ends, to anticipate difficulties and to prepare to avoid or overcome them. Or, if they are found to be absolutely insurmountable, to decline in season to embark in a project, which can result in nothing but discomfiture and ruin.

There is another element in human affairs, which the man of intuitions fails to consider, but which the logical man allows its full force. Imperfection enters largely into every thing with which man has to do. The best human institutions are but a remote approximation to what is abstractly and absolutely right. No government ever secured absolute justice between man and man, and when imperfect justice is attained, it often costs many times more than it is worth, and it is not unfrequently hard to determine which is most the victim of legal process, he who does or he who suffers wrong. Who then is to decide what evils are necessary and what are capable of being removed, where interference does good and where the remedy is worse than the disease?

But the logician has his faults as well as the man of intuitions. He may see dangers where there are none, or exaggerate those that really exist. He may err therefore, on the side of too much caution, and pusillanimously conclude to attempt nothing, when the most glorious things might be accomplished; or he hangs in doubt and irresolution so long that the favorable moment is suffered to go by, and generations may elapse, before another opportunity occurs. Hence, the two opposing parties in almost every community, of the radicals and the conservatives, one always ripe for revolution, the other more willing to suffer present evils, than to rush on others which they know not of.

It is remarkable that these two types of mind and character should have distinctly developed themselves at the very dawn of philosophy as a study and a pursuit. Philosophy may be said to have commenced her career on earth as a study, a pursuit and a profession at Athens, in the fifth century before Christ. Its first professor was Socrates, the greatest and the wisest of uninspired men. In him, as far as we can learn from the memoirs left of him by two of the most eminent of his disciples, the two elements of mind and character of which we have been speaking, the theoretical and the practical, the logical and the intuitive, the impulsive and the deliberative, were admirably balanced and proportionately combined. No fondness for speculation ever carried him away into the airy regions of mere idealism, and no fondness for bare utility led him to deny or ignore those lofty sentiments and aspirations which alone

are able to crown humanity with glory and honor. He pursued philosophy, not with the vain and selfish ambition of display, reputation or influence, but to point out the way to a virtuous life; not to furnish the implements of disputation and a warfare of words, but to correct the vices of society and improve the condition of man.

In that nice balance of mind and character, Socrates had no successor in the schools of Athens, nor has he had many any where from that day to this. Plato, indeed, stood up in his place, but not to exhibit the same admirable intellectual proportions. In him the idealistic element predominated in over-measure. He was essentially a poet, and had he confined himself to that sphere, he might have rivalled Homer, Eschylus and Pindar. But it was his fate to be a philosopher by profession, and to spend his life in petrifying into philosophical dogmas, the poetic creations of his glowing imagination. The consequence was, that his philosophy as a system was airy and unsubstantial. When tried by the process of rigid analysis, his dogmas were found to dissolve into mist and smoke. But though he failed to arrive at truth by the process of analysis, by poetic inspiration he did enunciate truths which needed no demonstration, and which relate to the highest problems of man's nature, duty and destiny. Although mainly unsuccessful in the fields of logic and deduction, he ascended into regions which the mere logician never treads, the regions bordering on prophetic inspiration. He uttered oracles which met a wider reception, and exerted a deeper influence than ever

were produced by the most skilful analysis. And the success of his method showed, that truth comes into the soul, not alone through the windows of the senses, but is likewise elaborated in its inmost recesses, or wells up from its profoundest depths, where it mingles at last mysteriously with the Divine essence. The spirituality of God, and of the soul, the tie of religion which binds them forever together, these were themes which needed no labored demonstration. They meet a response in every mind. It is said, that the speculations of Plato were mystical and cloudy. But through the rifts of those clouds, we catch glimpses of the everlasting stars, which glitter forever, unchangeably in the vault of Heaven.

“Knowledge,” says he, “is not conceivable without the idea of God. From him knowledge proceeds, to him it tends, in him it rests. God is the beginning and the end of all. He is the measure of all being. Theology therefore is anterior to philosophy!”

Such truths as these may be said to emanate from a higher source than mere logic, and hence the followers of Plato regarded him with a species of religious veneration, and the Christian fathers looked upon his philosophy as almost co-ordinate with Judaism, as introductory to the mission of the Son of God.

As a scholar of Plato, appeared a mind of precisely the opposite type, in the person of Aristotle. As it was the sphere of Plato to bring down truth from the skies in sparkling masses, though often through clouds and thick darkness, so was it given to Aristotle to build it up from the solid foundations of the earth, a

stable, substantial, immovable structure. To Plato it was given to see things glorified with a prismatic halo of sentiment and fancy, to Aristotle to see the same things in the clear outline of stern reality. It is impossible to contemplate the grasp of his mighty intellect, or the number and magnitude of his achievements without a species of awe. We may name him almost without exaggeration, the father of science. When he came into the scientific world, every thing was lying about in the utmost conceivable disorder. When he left it, every thing was assorted, labelled and put away in its appropriate niche. He pointed out the method, he named and partly invented, the instruments of scientific investigation. He mapped out nearly the whole field of human knowledge, he formed and sent out corps of explorers into almost every province of nature, and furnished them with instructions how and where to carry on their examinations.

When he was gone, the world appreciated the grandeur of his conceptions and the vastness of his achievements, and were fully aware of the obligations he had conferred on all succeeding ages. But the world did not stop at gratitude and veneration. It went on to superstitious reverence and blind submission, and his imperial mind was permitted for more than fifteen hundred years to give laws to the scientific world. His word was law, and his opinions authority, and the power of his genius, which at first gave such an impetus to the human mind, at length operated precisely like a garment of iron, to put a stop to its further development. So strong an im-

pression did his intellect make upon the world, that it went near to stereotype philosophy, as he left, it to all generations. But his system had its faults and its imperfections, as well as its excellencies. It introduced a mechanical mode of reasoning into moral and metaphysical subjects, reduced the operations of mind to the laws which govern matter, and led men to undervalue those imponderable forces, which, after all, sway mankind with resistless power, like the hidden energy of gravitation, or the explosive violence of volcanic fires. In short, such importance did it attach to mere logical forms, that a dialectic argument, provided it was constructed with sufficient skill to hide its fallacy, was suffered to outweigh the testimony of consciousness to some of the most vital truths of morality and religion.

These two great minds, Plato and Aristotle, so different in endowment and so opposite in tendency, may be said for centuries to have divided between them the empire of the intellectual world. They did so, not only by the surpassing power of intellect, but because they represented the types of the two great classes into which mankind are divided, the intuitional and the logical. They acquired their followers not more by the conquest of conviction than by the attraction of sympathy.

During the middle ages, the Aristotelian philosophy was in the ascendant, because it was found the most powerful auxiliary and support of the scholastic theology, and the scholastic theology was the main pillar of the authority of the Church. With the Reformation, the intuitive philosophy burst forth

anew, and has played an important part not only in the speculations, but the great revolutions of modern times.

But what is more to our purpose, not only persons, but nations have exhibited the same diversity of endowment and disposition. There is in nations the same predominance of the logical or the ideal, the speculative or the practical; and this diversity has had no mean share in modifying the history and controlling the destinies of the world.

I begin with the Greeks themselves. In them was exhibited the highest development of the ideal. The world of mind was their peculiar sphere. With them, originated philosophy. There was scarcely a province of enquiry which they did not explore. Mankind are not aware of the extent of their obligations to these pioneers of knowledge. But they did nothing else, and the states of Greece destroyed themselves and each other, by a rabid partizanship of different theories and forms of government. The only great thing which they ever achieved of a practical nature, was the conquest of Asia under Alexander. This was an achievement worthy of their transcendent endowments, and it left its marks upon the world which have endured to the present hour. The precious seed of Greek literature more than compensated the desolations of war. Arts, literature and refinement were borne into Asia upon the crimson tide of conquest, and the four centuries that succeeded the Macedonian invasion, are almost the only bright spot in the dull annals of the oriental world. But who was Alexander? He was the pupil of

Aristotle, the prince of logicians, the stern, inflexible teacher of practical realities. Under his tutelage, the young prince had explored not the regions of dream-land, but the substantial phenomena of this actual world, he had learned to encounter not theories and hypotheses, but men and things as they were. And what was the consequence? When the full force of Grecian genius was turned from abstract speculation to practical realities, from the schools of Athens into the fields of battle, nothing could stand before it, and the Macedonian armies swept like a tempest over the East. Had Plato instead of Aristotle been the teacher of the son of Philip, in some romantic hour he might have resigned the sceptre, and ended his life at Athens in the idle disputes which ever agitated that speculative people, who did little else than enquire after every thing that was new.

The Romans, from the first, were men of business and not of speculation. Ten years in the prime of life spent in the army, and the rest of it in the management of public affairs, created a nation of soldiers and statesmen. The Roman was the utilitarian of antiquity. His mission, as he conceived, was to conquer and govern the world. Every thing which promised to promote this grand object had a value in his eyes. Beyond this, every thing had merely a fanciful and fictitious estimation. When Carneades and his Athenian embassy came to Rome and began to show off his metaphysical subtilty in the forum by eulogizing justice one day, with copiousness and eloquence, and the next day by dis-

paraging it with just as much plausibility, the stern Cato, who was standing in the crowd, smote his staff upon the ground exclaiming "May the gods give such principles to our enemies."

The thorough practical spirit of the Romans, spoke out in one short sentence recorded in the New Testament. Paul, as you recollect, was accused before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, of having made certain important modifications in the Jewish religion, and such as in the opinion of his accusers threatened an entire overthrow of the whole institute. Gallio heard them patiently through, and then said to them, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you. But if it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters." The Roman knew his business and he attended to it, and let the world of speculation go as it pleased.

I now come down to modern times. Within the last ten years, the central power of Europe has enjoyed the most glorious opportunity which the world has ever seen, of re-organizing society and government upon the everlasting basis of truth and justice. Old institutions were utterly swept away, leaving the future a blank, upon which any thing might be written by the hand of wisdom and patriotism. Three transcendental ideas were started, which in fact, embody the first principles of the welfare of men and nations. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." And could not such a glorious programme be carried out? Principles so plain could not be denied or

gainsaid. They carry their own evidence with them wherever man is man. But where are they now? The hands that wrote them down as the last results of human progress, are now engaged in blotting them out as chimerical or false. Those who undertook to carry them out, were destitute of the logical element, the practical wisdom which adapts means to ends, and sees and acknowledges the wide space which must ever intervene between what is possible and what is abstractly right. Fraternity was interpreted with too wide a latitude, and the State was made to interfere to do that which every man can better do for himself,—find his own employment and settle his own wages. The political and social millennium did not come. The socialistic prophets were proved false, and instead of being glorified as the harbingers of a better time, they were denounced and cast out as mountebanks and deceivers, and the very word democracy is now scouted as a cheat and a delusion.

It was this fatal mistake, which has led a gallant nation to surrender, apparently without regret, the fruits of the sacrifices and tears and blood of the last sixty years, and submit to more than imperial rule, with almost as much tameness as the degenerate Romans bowed their necks to the grand nephew of Julius the Great.

And what shall we say of the forty millions who speak the German tongue? Nobler hearts never beat in human bosoms than have there throbbed for freedom ever since Armenius beat back the legions of all conquering Rome.

At this day, there are patriotism and enthusiasm enough between the Rhine and the Oder to build up the grandest confederation that Europe has ever seen since the days of Charlemagne, which might be the bulwark of freedom against the Autocrat of the north, and become *clarum et venerabile nomen gentibus*. There is the physical strength to accomplish all this. But is there any prospect that it will be brought to pass? If every thing else were propitious, this alone would be sufficient to put a veto on the whole proceeding, that there is in the German mind a monstrous preponderance of the ideal over the practical, the intuitive over the logical. If there were to assemble to-morrow a Congress of the German States, such as severed the United States from the mother country, they would be very likely to waste the first three months in earnest debate, whether the new government should be called a democratic republic, or a republican democracy!

In England, on the other hand, the preponderance is the other way. The logical and the practical element bears rule. No visions from dream-land have ever upset the solid reason of the British mind. Their errors have always been on the safe side. They have had the wisdom to let what they considered well enough, alone. They have always been suspicious of reform. Their language has always been to the magnificent promises of the improvers of their constitution, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. And to those who would cut in pieces the venerated body of their parent, that it might come out of the cauldron glowing in all the freshness of youth, For-

bear! Experimentum in corpore vili. The bulwark of European freedom is too precious to be subjected to the chances of a rash empiricism. And so our venerated mother goes on from age to age, disfigured by the most old fashioned habiliments, and loaded down with some of the absurdest trumpery of the dark ages. She gets angry when you tell her that her church establishment is only a patch from the tattered garment of the scarlet woman, and her two universities as much behind the age as the stage coaches which are rotting down by hundreds in her stable yards, while the world is rushing by with arrowy speed along the tracks of her magnificent rail roads. She has a sharp eye for the injustice, partiality and mismanagement of other mothers, and she lectures them roundly whenever she gets an opportunity. But her house of Lords and her rights of primogeniture, though as flagrant a violation of justice as slavery itself, are the admiration of her eyes, and the pride of her heart. Her sensibilities are moved almost to tears, when she hears of the sufferings of the bondmen which she herself first doomed to servitude. But the groans of India and the sighs of Ireland, though breathed under her very ear, seem to give her but very little uneasiness. She seems to imagine, that the lower stratum of her society have been so long standing in the mud to sustain the glittering pinnacle of the upper ten thousand, that they have become used to it, and it is no longer any inconvenience.

It is natural for every man to glorify his country. But I trust I am laboring under no self-delusion,

when I maintain, that in no nation have these two antagonistic endowments of the human mind, the intuitive and the logical, the ideal and the practical, been so proportionately developed as in the American mind. We have been tried in various ways, both in speculation and experience.

I read the just balance of the American mind in the decided repulse it has given to ultra-transcendentalism within the last twenty years. It came to us in the most seductive form. It came decked out with all the refinements of literary taste, it moved with the grace of native genius, it was sometimes commended with the power of a splendid eloquence. And whom did it seduce? It numbered among its converts scarcely a corporal's guard.

The hard features of the New England intellect relaxed into a good-natured smile, in which it was hard to determine which predominated, hospitality or love of fun, while it went on to expound its philosophy of matters and things in general, in which it proceeded to demonstrate by a transcendental logic that any thing is every thing and every thing is nothing at all, and that things are so mixed up, that it is impossible to tell what is what! All this she heard with patience. But when it came to graver themes, when it attacked the authority of her Bible, when it sunk the holy Prophets and Apostles to the level of heathen poets and philosophers, when it took away her Saviour, and analysed her God into an impersonal combination of the forces of the Universe, her features contracted into an indignant frown, and she exclaimed in horror, Anathema, Maranatha.

In no nation since time began have there been achieved such gigantic conquests over physical nature as in this country have marked the first half of the nineteenth century. This after all, is the test of the practical character of a nation. The test is not how much knowledge a nation gains, but how it uses that knowledge, how by means of it, she renders life more rich in beautiful embellishment and solid satisfaction. By no nation on earth has physical comfort been so well provided for. The mechanical powers have been put to their true use, the diminution of human labor, the cheapening of the articles of common necessity, and the redemption of time from the slavery of toil for the cultivation of the intellectual and moral faculties. In no nation has wealth been applied to more legitimate purposes, the extension of education to all classes, and the establishment of charitable institutions, by which the poor and unfortunate have been gathered in from the highways and by-ways of life, and their hearts gladdened by the voice of Christian sympathy and kindness.

But we are not a nation of mere utilitarians. The same age which has produced the reaping machine has produced the Greek slave. The stern realities and practical utilities of life are not permitted to shut out the ideal. Fulton was a painter before he adapted the power of steam to navigation, and dispensed with the services of the winds in bearing commerce over the ocean wave, and sent her onward in her victorious career by the force of the imprisoned elements. Morse was an artist of no mean attainments when he meditated that wonderful mechanism by

which thought has been yoked with the lightning, and mind communicates with mind over half a continent. We understand and we feel great principles, and we know how to contend for them.

Seventy-six years ago, there was assembled in the capital of this State, a body of men, whom we may proudly call the best representatives of the American character. They had come together to debate, perhaps the most momentous question which was ever decided in the political world, whether the then colonies of England should be free and independent states. There were Hancock and Adams and Sherman and Livingston and Carroll and Jefferson, and their illustrious compeers, representatives from every latitude and longitude, then embraced in our territories, and comprehending every variety of genius and temperament, which has ever been exhibited amongst us. Was there wanting in that assembly any manifestation of the ideal, those grand intuitions which inspire and elevate and transport the soul, which transcend all reasoning, and require only to be stated to carry their own demonstration along with them? Was there any want of the transcendental element in the minds of men who could write down as the basis of their enterprise, who could inscribe on their banners, to be read of all nations and to descend to all futurity, the fundamental truth, that "all men are born free and equal?" Was there any want of the ideal when after Independence was achieved, the fathers of the Constitution convened to draw up that immortal instrument? Whence but out of the regions of pure ideality, could they have drawn the ground plan of our confederation?

The Republics of antiquity furnished them with but few land-marks to guide their deliberations. The Grecian states had done something. They had demonstrated the possibility of the grand postulate of all democratic rule, that power might ascend from the people and be delegated for limited periods and specific purposes, to a government whose officers should be the bona fide servants of the people. But democracy had existed in Greece on a small scale, and with not altogether satisfactory results. It had run its career, and ended in what its enemies every where declare to be its ultimate tendency, agrarianism, which would divide all the property, and ostracism, which would banish all the talent—in short, in a low, leveling envy, which would crush every man who is raised above the masses by the splendor of his natural endowments, or the extent of his acquisitions. That grand Republic which began its career on the banks of the Tiber, and preserved its integrity till it had mastered the civilized world, had shown that magistracy need not always vest in a hereditary caste, but that there is a sovereignty independent of a royal family and a privileged order. But the final catastrophe, the winding up of the grand Republic in a military despotism, had again involved in doubt, the permanency of free institutions.

Whence then could have come the plan of that form of government, which for more than sixty years has worked so admirably, and from three millions has made us one of the most powerful nations on earth? Was there no ideality in the minds of men who could foresee and anticipate the wants of a great people

then in its infancy, balance so accurately the antagonistic powers of the state and the general government, reconcile the clashing interests of different sections, and unite a diversified people in the pursuit of a common good? Was there no ideality in this achievement of the highest problem of speculative reason, the construction of a constitution adapted to a national existence altogether new and unexampled in the records of time? Was there not an ideality bordering on inspiration, which early predicted the entire success of this grand experiment of modern freedom? Was there any want of lofty forecast in the mind of John Adams when he wrote to a friend, while the ink was hardly dry upon the instrument which had made us an independent nation, that the fourth of July would henceforth be a consecrated day to all generations, that its annual advent would be celebrated by feasting and illumination, by public processions, by the roar of cannon and universal demonstrations of joy?

But where would all this have ended, had there not been in the American mind, a proportionate development of the logical and the practical to carry out these sublime conceptions? The Declaration of Independence was no mere flourish of words. Our armies were already in the field to make it good. The men who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, knew the risks they ran as well as the glory they had in view, and they girded themselves to the great task of vindicating by arms what they had laid down in speculation. They had counted the cost, they had measured their strength.

They had weighed the juvenile power of a young country, just springing into existence, but animated by the imponderable force of freedom, against an old and powerful kingdom armed to enforce a wrong. And they calculated right. The struggle was fierce and long. The pride and resentment of the mother country were roused to the highest pitch, army after army was sent over to spread devastation and ruin through our towns and villages. But in proportion to the force of the pressure was the might of the recoil. The divine elasticity of the human soul rose up under the mountains of difficulties which were heaped upon it. When times grew dark, and the enterprise seemed on the verge of defeat, patriotism had ever a new sacrifice to make, which was equal to the emergency. We had a Washington at the head of affairs. He was no orator, as Patrick Henry was. But he was something better and greater. He was a man of massive wisdom, of colossal character, he was the culmination of the American type of the human race. There was no want of sentiment in him. For whose bosom was ever warmed by a purer or stronger love of country? What mortal man ever lived and acted for a nobler object? As his character was the highest manifestation of the American mind, so it was the sympathy and congeniality of the minds of his countrymen which enabled him to do what he did. Had not his mind and character been formed in the American school, he never could have compassed his great achievement, and had he not been sustained by precisely the same species of character which formed his own, his great

endeavor would have ended in discomfiture and defeat.

The immense influence therefore, which America is now exerting on the world, does not arise from the circumstance of our possessing a peculiar form of government, but rather it may be said, that our form of government and its practical operation, are a manifestation of our national mind, the balance at which we have arrived of the intuitive and logical powers, the impulsive sentiments and the guiding reason; a full appreciation of the right and the just, but at the same time a moderation begotten by the recognition of the necessary imperfections which environ all earthly things.

The philosophy of the American mind therefore, IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON SENSE; which is nothing more nor less than a just balance of all the powers of the human constitution. The nations of the earth can imitate our prosperity and happiness only so fast and so far as they obtain the possession of this grand postulate of all prosperity, the philosophy of common sense.

That this country has a great mission to fulfil, I do most religiously believe. It is destined to accomplish that mission by the example of its institutions, but still more, by the influence of its literature. This after all, is the most controlling force which one nation exerts upon another. It is spoken out of a nation's mind and heart, and transfuses, if such a thing can be, the very soul of one people into another.

That we are to have a national literature of surpassing power, I cannot doubt for a moment. It will

embody our ideas. It will breathe our spirit. It will be free, untrammelled, unwarped by the institutions, the prejudices and conventionalities of the old world. It will be pervaded and inspired by the philosophy of common sense. It will traverse oceans, it will scale mountains, it will visit the isles of the sea. It will communicate to all lands the rich treasure of our political experience. It will make known the results of our social experiments. It will teach the nations how they may become free, progressive and happy, and under Providence, it will be the means, next to the glorious Gospel of the Book of Life, of blessing and regenerating the world.

THE FLIGHT OF YEARS.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

First Independent Church of Baltimore,

BY

Washington

REV. GEORGE W. BURNAP, D. D.

On the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of his Ordination.

PRINTED NOT PUBLISHED.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY.

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1853.

DISCOURSE.

FOR A THOUSAND YEARS IN THY SIGHT ARE BUT AS YESTERDAY WHEN
IT IS PAST, AND AS A WATCH IN THE NIGHT.—PSALM 90, 4.

I KNOW of no words in which the rapid flight of time is more powerfully portrayed than in these words of the Psalmist. They bring the thing home to us so strongly, that they produce a sort of breathless astonishment, as if we beheld the car of time itself rushing by so swiftly, that it is almost at the same moment approaching, passing and disappearing out of sight. The ages that are gone become as a dream, the present diminishes to a point, and we anticipate the time, when the generation that now is, shall be numbered among the things of the past, and all that interests us so deeply, shall be regarded by our successors as an idle tale.

These thoughts are suggested to my mind by the fact, that yesterday completed a quarter of a century since my ordination in this place to the Gospel Ministry. At the distance of five and twenty years, it

comes up before my mind as vividly as if it were the next day. The emotions, the hopes and the fears of that hour, come back, the venerable men who took part in the ordination, long since passed away, the generation which then composed this congregation, very few of whom are left among us at this day.

What changes has a quarter of a century brought over the world! In the first place, I ought to thank God that I am alive. The average of ministerial service is only seventeen years. I have already advanced eight years beyond that limit with health unimpaired and energies undiminished, the boundless and romantic expectations of youth somewhat chastened, but with a firmer and calmer confidence in God, in Providence, and the ultimate triumph of truth and goodness. If I have not accomplished all that I hoped and anticipated, I have done something. At any rate, I have labored for the whole five and twenty years continuously, up to the limit of my strength.

The cause, when I came here, was nearly a forlorn hope. It had once broken down. The congregation was small and the church heavily in debt. The enterprise was sunk fathoms below the surface. The enthusiasm which accompanies and gives energy to a new enterprise was exhausted, and every thing was in a state of collapse. I had to begin, like the coral insect, at the very bottom of the ocean, and build up by an almost imperceptible process of accumulation. Twice afterwards we were nearly wrecked by commercial disaster, and a congregation slowly gathered were scattered to seek better fortunes in more favor-

able locations. Ten years of the twenty-five, were passed by us in a most precarious state of existence. Our church was then remote, almost in the country. It was almost a pilgrimage to reach it, and the stranger when he arrived, and was anxious to learn what our peculiar opinions were, in nine cases out of ten, found it wholly impossible to hear, let him listen with never so much attention. Every thing was against us but the truth, and that was on our side.

I, for one, was not aware of the Cimmerian darkness which every where reigned upon religious subjects, nor of the intolerant prejudices, which had become hardened into a petrification that could neither be chiseled by argument, nor melted by the genial breath of Christian charity. The people would neither hear nor read, which amounted to this, that if Unitarianism were true, they did not wish to know it. And then, if any were prevailed upon to examine, and became convinced, another struggle commenced, whether they were to avow their convictions, and openly join a worship over which there hung such a cloud of prejudice?

And here perhaps lay the greatest difficulty, after all. The multitude of the timid and the time-serving, said, "Have any of the chief rulers believed on him, and they did not dare to confess, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Some stole in like Nicodemus, by night, and confessed that the doctrines here preached were just what they had been believing all their days.

I early became convinced, that the Unitarian Church universal could have no solid foundation,

unless it were based upon thorough doctrinal conviction. Until a man becomes thoroughly convinced that Unitarianism is the doctrine of the Bible, he can have no decision, or energy, or zeal to act in the cause. "How long halt ye," saith the Scripture, "between two opinions?" The emphatic word in this sentence is, *halt*. He that is in doubt, naturally stands still. He cannot move, neither ought he to move, until he arrives at some definite and decided conviction as to what he ought to do. The proper basis of religious opinion is a knowledge of the Scriptures. They are the fountain of religious knowledge, and if they are so obscure, that their meaning cannot be ascertained, they are not a revelation from God.

But it is said by some, that you must show your theology to be right by your religion. You must show that your doctrines are true by your extraordinary pietism. If others have a prayer meeting once a month for the conversion of the world, you must have one once a fortnight. But the Pharisees tried this method ages ago, and were more abundant in their devotions than any other sect has ever been since, especially in public. Did that prove their theology to be true, or their religion sincere? The fact that we resort to such means in order to show our piety, demonstrates that we act from a Pharisaical motive, and in itself deprives us of all spiritual benefit.

Another says, "Show that your theology is true by your philanthropy. Gather in from the streets, the poor, the lame and the blind." But we must do

our Catholic brethren the justice to admit, that in deeds of devoted charity they have outdone all other denominations. And yet every other denomination denounces their theology as in the last degree false, dark and superstitious.

Another says, "Show that your theology is true by the fervor of your missionary zeal. Go preach the Gospel among the heathen, abandon all for the conversion of the Pagans." But the order of men which has done the most of this, is that of the Jesuits. The sands of Africa and the snows of the frozen poles have been tracked by their devoted feet, their bones lie mingled with the soil of every heathen land. And yet the whole Christian world has cried out against both their theology and their morality, and the wisest and best men have declared them to be the worst enemies of freedom and of man. They have been banished by enlightened states, as too dangerous and corrupt to be tolerated among human institutions. Theological truth is not to be arrived at by any such indirect and circuitous process of argumentation. It must be taken directly from the Bible, interpreted by reason and common sense. The truth is the plastic soul of religion. "Sanctify them," said the Saviour, "through thy truth, thy word is truth." The soul must form and control the body, not the body the soul. I must continually revert to the Scriptures, in order to know what true religion is. If I do not, I am in constant danger, from custom, from tradition and example, of taking that for religion which is merely error and superstition.

This theology may be polemical—nay must be polemical, if some thing else has already prevailed and been established in its place.

Educated in another faith, and finding it not to be true, when I commenced the study of theology, I was determined, if the thing could be accomplished, to find out what was true, what was really taught in the Holy Oracles. Much, I may say, most of the last eight and twenty years has been devoted by me to that object. More than two years were spent by me in the study of a single Epistle of the New Testament. No words can express the gratification I have felt, as one passage after another which had always seemed dark and mysterious, was explained and became to my mind clear, intelligible and consistent.

I have given you from the pulpit and the press, many courses of doctrinal and expository lectures. I have thought it my duty to do so. It has cost me much labor, ten times the labor which as many practical discourses on the common topics discussed in the pulpit would have demanded. But in the present state of things, such a course is absolutely necessary. Without it, you could have no settled convictions, no peace to your souls. You would be disturbed by every opposing argument, and silenced by every plausible objection. I have labored, that in the language of the Apostle, “we should be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up to him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, till we all

come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

In my preaching, I have endeavored to exhibit the Gospel just as I found it, without modification or concealment. I believe in the power and efficacy of the truth. I believe it to be the best, the safest, and most beneficial thing in the world. It is the light of life, and the salvation of the soul. It is the greatest power next to God.

The Christian Ministry, which has for its object the diffusion of truth over the world, I have ever looked upon as the wisest and most salutary of all institutions. He who discourses of God, of Christ, of human duty and immortality, aims at the very centre of the condition, the welfare and the happiness of man. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

I have endeavored to aid you to form worthy conceptions of God, that when you turn your thoughts to him, he may shine upon your souls in the full orb'd radiance of his divine perfections, purifying your souls from all that is evil, and warming every virtue into life and activity. I have endeavored to illustrate his benignant Providence, and to show him as the Infinite Father of his creatures. In that glorious appellation, I have striven to make all mysteries plain, and to show, that even evil, as seen from the side next to God, is not all dark. It has its illuminated side too, when shone upon by the light which streams from the throne of the Eternal. It is reconcilable with perfect wisdom and perfect love.

I have preached Christ as I have found him exhibited in the Scriptures, not as God, or claiming the nature and the homage which belong to God, nor yet as interposing between us and God to introduce confusion into our conceptions of the divine unity and essence, but as the appointed Mediator, the Ambassador of God's mercy, the Revealer of his will, the Teacher and Example of a perfect life, our Forerunner into heaven, and the Pledge of immortality to man.

I have preached him as the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Founder of a perfect religion, destined gradually to develope itself in the minds, the hearts and the lives of men, and finally to spread over the whole earth, blessing every kingdom and nation, and tribe of mankind.

I have preached the Rectitude of Human Nature, that man was made in God's image, and that human nature has never changed. Individuals have debased and degraded themselves, and I have taught that the greatness of their sin was measured by the dignity of that nature which they humiliated, the clearness and strength of those moral perceptions which they violated, the sanctity of the religious convictions which they trampled under foot, and the possible happiness which they marred and blasted.

I have preached a future righteous retribution, in which all shall receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil. I have taught that this retribution is inevitable, and that it begins now and here, in every pang of a wounded conscience, in every

emotion of shame, in every sigh of regret, in every shudder of apprehension, which the dark prospects of sin cause to the rash and presumptuous offender. I have taught that the path of the just, though hedged in with thorns, is as the rising light, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

I have preached the necessity of the Christian character and a Christian life. I have promised no man peace here, or happiness hereafter, without them. I have never prophesied smooth things, or professed to point out an easy path to heaven. I have ever said, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord." I have not preached a mere worldly morality, unaccompanied by any emotion of piety to God and benevolence to man. I have ever said, that the shortest way to morality is through religion, that the first of all duties is to get the heart right and keep it so, and then all duty will be easy and spontaneous. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and then all necessary things will be added unto you." To these doctrines I have trusted, with the assisting grace of God, for the formation of the Christian character. I have endeavored, as far as it lay in me, that no sabbath should pass over any of my hearers unimproved. I have striven so to preach, that no one should go from the house of God without deeper convictions of truth and duty, without a firmer faith in the reality of spiritual things, and a more serious purpose of leading a Christian life.

I have studied by all means to divorce religion forever from cant and superstition, and make men aware that religion does not consist in saying "Lord,

Lord, but in doing those things which Christ hath commanded," that a man has just as much religion as he has practical goodness and no more. The highest human attribute is integrity, and the best thing that can be said of any man is, that he may be depended on.

In pursuing this course of instruction, I have deviated neither to the right hand nor the left. I have consulted no time hallowed opinions, nor ancient prejudices. I have believed that there could be nothing better than the exact truth. It is truth which makes us free, both from the bondage of error, and the slavery of sin.

In the power and efficacy of the truth honestly exhibited, I have not been disappointed. Under its influence, I think I have seen a steadily increasing religious earnestness and sensibility. This is the most attentive audience that I have ever seen. And so far are we from religious pretension or grimace, that I do not know a single individual among us who would step out of his way to appear to the world a whit better, or other than he really is. Our communion is proportionally large, and it is a growing one. It has a due proportion of the young and the old. No doubtful expedients are resorted to to get people into it, and no terrors of superstition are called in to make it an oppression and a slavery.

In my judgment, a religious society thus constituted, rests on a solid and substantial foundation. It requires no artificial excitements, no ostentatious exhibitions, no temporary expedients to keep it alive. It subsists on the solid meat of the word of God, and

it must grow in grace, and in the knowledge and practice of all that is good.

I now turn to our relation to the world without. What have we done, and what are we doing for the spread of those doctrines and that form of Christianity which we regard as true and salutary to mankind? I answer, that there are no means by which we can measure this influence. It is an unchangeable law, that "the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation, neither shall men say, Lo here or Lo there." "The kingdom of heaven is as a little leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." It is compared to the growing grain, which appears, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

There is no society in our whole denomination, in which so much has been done in the production of a Unitarian literature. The books and pamphlets which have here been given to the public, would constitute of themselves quite a theological library. But the difficulty has always been to find listeners and readers. There is a universal fear of examination. It is thought dangerous even to look into one of our books.

We work therefore to the greatest possible disadvantage. We have not the authority which always attaches to numbers. We are too honest and liberal to work on the fears of mankind, by assuring them that the only access to the kingdom of heaven is through our dogmas and our communion.

We are surrounded by propagandism on every side, always unfair and generally unscrupulous, which compasses sea and land to make a proselyte. We, I

hope, shall never become propagandists in the sectarian and odious sense of the word. But there is a sense in which we are bound in duty to be propagandists. We are bound, as it seems to me, to supply the means of information, as fast as there is a disposition to receive it.

There is at this moment, a general ferment among all denominations. Every sect is divided into two parties, one in favor of progress, the other contented to abide by the dogmas of the past. Such division must produce discussion, and discussion is all we want. It seems to me, therefore, that now is our time to redouble our diligence. We ought to be more aggressive and enterprising than we ever have been before. It appears to me, that there are unmistakable indications of a greater readiness to hear and read, than there ever have been before.

I know of nothing that can now be done on this our earth, nothing which so invites the rich man to employ his wealth, and the active man his energy, as the enterprise of spreading abroad in this land the pure and uncorrupted Gospel. This is the only country in which truth has had a fair opportunity. It is, in my judgment, of the highest importance, that Christianity as we understand it, should have a liberal support and an energetic administration in all our large cities, and especially in all great centres of population, commerce and travel. Thus it was at the commencement of the Gospel. Churches were established at the capital cities of the Roman Empire, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome; and from them the whole world was evangelized and con-

verted to Christ. And so it will be here, if we have embraced the truth and are faithful to our mission. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light shine before men, and hide it not under a bushel."

I should be unfaithful to this occasion and fail to express my own feelings, were I to omit this day to commemorate the dead, and bring up before your minds our fellow worshippers who have passed away. A quarter of a century has swept away nearly a whole generation. Few, very few heads of families are left. O how vividly do they rise up in memory as I cast my eyes around within these walls. One after another, the hoary head has disappeared from the sanctuary of God. Other heads have whitened in the suns and snows of slow revolving years. The children of that day are now in middle life, and coming to worship with their children in the place where their fathers prayed. Their memories are precious, and no where more precious than in the house of God. They set a high value on their faith, and they made great sacrifices for it. They demonstrated that it was a sufficient guide in life and support in death.

It is good for us to remember them, especially in this place. Though dead, they yet speak to us, and if they could audibly address us from the spiritual world, doubtless they would assure us that the most precious of their earthly recollections are the hours of their communion with God, and of the enjoyment of his worship. They would say to us, "This is your day of enterprise and of action. Up and be doing. Labor while it is day, the night cometh, wherein no

man can work. The harvest is plenteous, the laborers are few."

"When you arrive at this world which is our eternal abode, the things which now absorb your minds and threaten to swallow up your affections, will seem less than the small dust of the balance, but every good thought, every holy act, every effort for truth and holiness, every cup of cold water ministered to the servants of God, will come to you as a breath of fragrance from the paradise of the blessed."

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VINDICATION

OF THE

UNITARIAN FAITH:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

EVENING OF APRIL 2, 1854,

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, S. C.,

BY

Washington
REV. GEORGE W. BURNAP, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH, BALTIMORE.

CHARLESTON:

STEAM POWER PRESS OF WALKER & JAMES,

No. 3 Broad-street

1854.

DISCOURSE.

JOHN, xvii. : 3.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, my predecessor in the pulpit I occupy, came to this city to participate in the ordination of the present senior pastor of this Society. It was to him, I know, an occasion of devout joy and hearty satisfaction, as it consummated the establishment of a church devoted to the dissemination of what he believed to be the truth of the gospel. It is with no less pleasure that I, at the distance of five and thirty years, am present to participate in these dedicatory rites, by which you consecrate this beautiful temple to the worship of the Most High.

To the members of this religious society, the consecration of this edifice to the worship of God, must be an event of the profoundest interest. They must feel that the enterprise now completed is a pledge, that their views of Christianity have in them an element of vitality, strength, and endurance, which is a characteristic of the truth of God.

To the elderly it is suggestive of the past, and carries their minds back, doubtless, to the dawn of Unitarian Christianity in this city, and brings to their recollection the person and character of that saintly scholar and Christian, who first planted the standard of liberal opin-

ions in the heart of this ancient commonwealth.* If they appreciate their position, they must feel that no Protestant society can look back to an origin more honorable and legitimate. As the Reformation in Germany apparently sprang from the studies of a solitary monk, accidentally aroused by the discovery of a copy of the Bible in a library at Erfurt, so did this Church apparently owe its origin to the inquiries of a conscientious and fearless Protestant divine, accidentally turned to the investigation of the scriptural argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. Though a member of the Presbyterian church, he had the penetration to perceive and the honesty to avow the conviction, that the *principles of the Reformation* and the *doctrines of the Reformers* were two different things, and wholly distinct from each other. The principles of the Reformation are eternal and unchangeable, "the sufficiency of the scriptures and the right of private judgment." They command the allegiance of the human mind everywhere and forever. But the doctrines of the Reformers were the conclusions at which they happened to arrive in carrying out those principles. The principles might be just, and must ultimately conduct men to the truth, but the *opinions* at which the wisest men of that period arrived, may have been only an approximation to the truth. It was not to be expected that the Reformers, in the very twilight of modern illumination, and amidst the fierce antagonisms of the times, should have seen the whole of gospel truth. They were justified in drawing up, in distinct propositions, the conclusions to which they had come, as rallying points of impression and defence, but wholly inconsistent when they attempted to stereotype them for the faith of all succeeding ages. As inconsistent are succeeding generations of Protestants in passively receiving those opinions as the rule of their faith. It was in obedience, then, to the principles of the Reformation, that the venerated founder of this religious society

* Rev. Anthony Forster.

repudiated many of the doctrines of the Reformers, as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith. His own study of the Bible had convinced him that many of the doctrines to which he had subscribed in his youth, were the dogmas of men and not the teachings of the word of God. As a true Protestant, he was forced to reject them, to come out from a body which had abandoned, in form, the principles of the Reformation, and assert for himself "the sufficiency of the scriptures and the right of private judgment."

But to discover the truth, and to procure it to be extensively recognized in the world, are two totally different things. It is so in science, it is so in politics, but especially is it so in religion. For a time, every thing is against it, the force of prejudice, the bias of interest, and the power of existing institutions. Truth may consider itself fortunate, if it be not stifled and crushed at its first appearance. Wickliff appeared in England, and promulgated the very doctrines which afterwards constituted the glory of the Reformation, more than a century and a half before that great movement took place. Yet both he and his doctrines were overwhelmed by the darkness, the bigotry, and the barbarism of the times, and the world stumbled on in its ignorance another century and a half.

I esteem it a matter of congratulation, that this religious society has been able to stand up and maintain itself in the face of all the influences which, in a free and Protestant country, are still brought to bear on that association of Christians who are bold or honest enough to dissent from the popular creed.

To the young, this day is a day of grateful acknowledgment and pleasing anticipation. It assures them that the worst is past; their fathers have borne the burden and heat of the day. "Other men have labored and they have entered into their labors." The denomination

to which they belong has become a fixed fact, one of the recognized realities of the present age. It has an elaborated and a systematic theology, and a religious literature unsurpassed in learning, in genius, and in eloquence. It is one of the elements of our vast and comprehensive nationality, and is destined to work mightily on the opinions and institutions of coming ages.

But there are some here to-night, doubtless, who are disposed to take a different view of the exercises and influences of this day; who see little else in them than mischief and danger. They conscientiously believe that the gospel, as it is here to be exhibited, is shorn of almost every ray of its original glory; that Christianity is stripped of almost all its distinctive doctrines, and becomes a mere republication of the powerless and inefficient truths of Natural Religion. They believe that the *supreme Deity* of Jesus Christ, an *infinite, vicarious atonement*, and the *special, irresistible influences of the Holy Spirit*, are the sinner's only hope. Take these away, and they imagine that he abides forever under the wrath and curse of God. The denial, too, of the doctrines of *original sin* and *total depravity*, undermines, they apprehend, the conviction of human sinfulness, and discards the very object of the Saviour's mission upon earth. Were these views extensively to prevail, they think that piety would lose its vitality, and preaching its power, the Sabbath would be desecrated, God's altars be forsaken, and public morality subside to a level not far above the condition of heathen lands; that Christian enterprise would be paralyzed, the cause of missions languish, and no more heralds of the cross be found ready to toil and perish on a pagan soil. If I believed this, I could not stand before you to-night. My lips would be sealed, my tongue would be dumb. It is because I believe precisely the opposite of this, that I am come thus far to lift up my voice amidst the solemnities of this occasion. Far be it

from me to utter one word which should diminish the piety and religion there are in the world, or to eclipse the glory of that gospel which was given for the light and salvation of mankind.

It is because we believe that the doctrines Unitarians reject and oppose, are the greatest hinderance of the spiritual power of the gospel in the world, that our exertions to substitute for them a more rational faith are so earnest, so constant, and so persevering. We believe that the doctrines of the trinity, of original sin, of a vicarious atonement, of the imputation of sin and holiness, of human inability and irresistible grace, and the consequent doctrines of election and reprobation, are irreconcilable with reason, are gross violations of the moral sense, and of course set the highest and best principles of our nature, in direct opposition to any system of religion, of which they are represented to make a part. Any thing unreasonable, inconsistent, or contradictory, which is alleged to be found in the scriptures, diminishes the probability that the scriptures contain a revelation from God, and any thing arbitrary, tyrannical, or unjust, attributed to God, tends just so far to destroy a belief in the perfection of his character, and thus to undermine the very foundation of religion itself. We believe that one of the chief reasons of the inefficacy of preaching is, that it wars against the reason and moral sense of mankind quite as much as it does against their vices and passions. It makes reason and conscience its foes and not its allies, and therefore it is weak.

In the first place, then, we argue *that the doctrines we oppose obstruct the power of the gospel, by introducing confusion, contradiction, and inconsistency into public worship.*

In Christian lands, the people come together once a week to worship God. In the sacred scripture, there is only ONE OBJECT of prayer. Not only so, there is not only but one object of prayer, but there is only ONE PERSON,

who is the object of prayer, the only living and true God. Throughout the whole Bible, God is worshipped not only as one being, but as *one person*. And this is because God had *revealed* himself to man as one person. To Abraham he said—"Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward." I am thy shield. I, represents a person, and only *one* person. Abraham understood him to mean a person, and only one person, for he prays—"Lord God, what wilt *thou* give me, seeing I go childless?"

When Jehovah reveals himself to Moses, it is with no less distinctive marks of his personal unity. Out of the midst of the burning bush, he proclaims—"I am the God of thy Father Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you." That Moses understood the Almighty to reveal himself as subsisting in one person, appears from the expostulation which succeeds—"O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since *thou* hast spoken unto *thy* servant."

Accordingly we have, in the Book of Psalms, the devotions of the ancient people of God, whose opinions were moulded by the Mosaic revelation, extending over a period of more than a thousand years. In the whole of the one hundred and fifty, God is spoken of and addressed as not only one being, but *ONE PERSON*. There is no intimation of any plurality in him of any kind. The language is everywhere of this description—"O God, *thou* art my God, early will I seek *thee*."

So it is in the New Testament. Our Saviour not only taught the personal unity of God, but he prayed to God as to one person, and taught his followers to do the same. He taught with Moses—"The first of all the commandments is, Jehovah your God, Jehovah is one." He himself prayed to God as one person—"My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me!" He taught his disciples to

do the same. After this manner, therefore, pray ye:—
 “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be *thy* name,
thy kingdom come, *thy* will be done.”

His apostles, shortly after his ascension “to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God,” unite in a prayer, and they address themselves to only one object, although their Master is mentioned in it. “Lord, *thou* art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that in them is. * * * And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto *thy* servants that with all boldness they may speak *thy* word, by stretching forth *thy* hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of *thy* holy servant Jesus.”

But, after all this precept and example, let us go into an Episcopalian Church, and what do we hear? We hear prayers directed to *three objects* instead of one. “O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!” God, the Father of heaven, can be no other God than the God who was worshipped by the apostles—“Lord, *thou* art God, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea.” Then another object is introduced, with another name and another function—“O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.” Then there is a third object presented, with still another name and function—“O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!” Then it may be said that there is a fourth object introduced—“O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.” This fourth object must be different from the others, or it would not have been introduced.

Is not such a complicated form of worship as this calculated to produce the greatest confusion in the human mind? If the phraseology of these petitions be literally understood, then, in order to our forgiveness, there must

be a concurrent action between the three persons of the Trinity before we can be forgiven. This at once conflicts with the theory of atonement, which makes a part of the same system of religion. The Son has made an atonement to the Father for the sins of the world, but no atonement has been made to the Son. No atonement has been made to the Holy Ghost, and so although the Father may forgive sin, the Son and the Holy Ghost cannot, and they must remain forever unreconciled.

Then let the mind dwell for a moment on the ideas which are brought together by the expression, "God the Son." A being, to be God, must be *underived*, *self-existent*, and *without beginning*. A being, who is a Son, must be *derived*, *dependent*, and *have had a beginning*. The very phrase then, "God the Son," is a self-contradiction. It cannot represent a real being, or any real existence in the universe. The ideas contained in it are mutually destructive of each other.

Let the worshipper reflect, moreover, that there is no such being revealed or named in the scriptures, as "God the Son;" no such juxtaposition of words in the Bible. The nearest approach to it is in the epithet, "Son of God," which was applied to Jesus of Nazareth, and was, in the time of the apostles, merely a synonym for Christ or Messiah.

As the Litany proceeds, the mind of the worshipper is still further confounded by finding that one of these objects of adoration has *a human nature*, and is worshipped as having been *conceived*, and *born*, and *circumcised*; as having *died* and *been buried*—"By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation; by thine agony and bloody sweat." How can the human mind, which has any just conceptions of the nature of the Deity, associate such ideas as these with the being and attributes of

God? A being infinite, eternal, unchangeable, pervading all space, without parts or passions, a pure spirit, incapable of suffering or death?

If the worshipper chance to enter a Presbyterian Church, he will listen to no formal attempt to pray to a Trinity. Without a written form, such an attempt would be exceedingly difficult of success. It would be next to impossible not to stumble in it, for language has its laws as well as thought. There is no way in which an address can be made without the use of *personal pronouns*. A person is an indivisible unit. A person cannot be divided even in thought. To divide a person, instantly destroys the very conception of personality. The converse is equally true; you cannot make three persons coalesce into one person, even in thought. That the thing is so, is shown by the fact, that when we have combined the three persons into the anomalous word Trinity, we spontaneously refer to it by the pronoun *it* and not by *he*. But *the whole Deity is a person*, and is so represented by the word God. It is so throughout the scriptures. In using the pronouns *thee* and *thou*, the minister who leads the devotions of the congregation we have just supposed, has in his mind the whole Deity. He does not mean to pray to a *part* of the Deity, nor to one person of the Deity. If he means to pray to one person of a Trinity, he is equally bound to address the three successively, and make precisely the same petitions to each, as we have already seen is done in the Episcopal service.

But, in neglect of his creed, in forgetfulness of his theology, he prays to God as *one* person. He prays precisely like a Unitarian. He approaches God in the name of Christ, as the Mediator. He prays to God to send the Holy Spirit, which represents it to be precisely what it is, an influence and not a person. But sometimes he addresses a prayer to Christ. He implores him to interfere in behalf of the worshipper. In doing so, however, he vio-

lates not only the first principles of religion, but the command of Christ himself. The only proper object of prayer, is "the Former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits"—he who controls the physical and moral universe. Christ sustains none of these relations. He is not our God, but our Intercessor with God. He himself says—"I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter." It is wholly irrational to pray to one who is in turn to pray for us to another.

Besides, Jesus, apparently apprehending that his followers, after his exaltation to heaven, would be tempted to pray to him, strictly forbade it. "In that day," said he, "ye shall ask *me* nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father in my name*, he will give it you."

So overwhelming is the evidence of the unity of God, so universal in the Bible is the worship of God in one person, and so impossible is it by the laws of thought and the structure of language, to maintain the worship of a Trinity of persons in God, that the very doctrine of the Trinity itself would soon die out, were there not especial pains taken to keep it alive.

If the casual worshipper in almost any popular church takes up the Hymn Book, he will find that the deficiency of the prayers is attempted to be supplied in the Psalmody. The doctrine of the Trinity, incapable of being woven into the prayers, or incorporated into the ordinary hymns, is supplied in a sort of appendix at the end; is versified in different metres, so as to be fitted on to the hymns which are sung in ordinary devotion, in the form of a doxology.

There is *another* reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in an appendix to the Hymn Book, besides the intrinsic difficulty of incorporating the worship of three persons as God into devotional poetry. The hymns of the modern Protestant churches were at first transla-

tions, or metrical versions of the psalms. The psalms are the devotional poetry of the Jewish nation, based upon the theology of Moses ; but, in the whole hundred and fifty, there is not a single allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity. It does not appear that any one of the writers ever entertained such an idea. God is everywhere addressed as *one* person and *only* one. In any just and honest translation of the psalms, *no* worship of a Trinity could be expressed. The doctrine had not then come into existence. In fact, the last three psalms are themselves doxologies, but they are addressed to Jehovah as *one* God, in *one* person. "Praise ye Jehovah, for *his* name alone is excellent, *his* glory is above the earth and heaven." No doxology to a Trinity could be inserted into the psalms without the most palpable interpolation. Hence, such doxologies are placed at the end, and by themselves, and when they are sung as appendages to the psalms, they present the most manifest inconsistency.

Our second proposition is, that the doctrines we oppose obstruct the power of the gospel, *by introducing confusion, inconsistency, and contradiction into the theology of the New Testament.*

Every church and every religious system rest on the basis of a distinctive theology. It was so with the Catholic church at the commencement of the Reformation. The beginning of that great movement was the nailing, by Luther, of ninety-five theological propositions to the door of the church in Wittemberg. So it is with Protestant churches at the present day. Each has its system of theology, carefully elaborated and framed together. The Episcopal church has her Articles and Catechism ; the Presbyterian church has her Confession of Faith and Catechisms.*

* These two communions are referred to here and elsewhere throughout the discourse, not from any invidious distinction, but because their manuals of faith are substantially adopted by most of the Protestant denominations.

The Protestant, in his controversy with the Catholic, appealed to the senses. He contended that the doctrine of transubstantiation was contradicted by three of the senses—by the sight, the touch, and the taste. The Catholic took refuge in *mystery*. He said it was a mystery, and must be believed, notwithstanding its contradiction by the senses. The Protestant answers, that the senses are constituted by God as the most indubitable evidence of any truth, and he who disbelieves his senses, violates a primary law of his intellectual nature.

In the same manner, the Unitarian examines the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated and maintained in most Protestant churches, by the laws of reason and logic, and with a like result. He finds that it will not bear the test. Reason is that faculty of the mind by which we distinguish truth from falsehood, and logic is the verbal process by which it is done.

Let us take, for instance, the fourth, fifth, and sixth questions of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, a manual of theology, which is recognized and established by the Presbyterian church of the United States. It is printed by hundreds of thousands, and distributed broad-cast over the land. It is taught to millions of children before the faculty of reason is sufficiently developed to compare its teachings with the Bible, or with the first principles of intuitive reason.

The three questions when analyzed are found, as it appears to me, to contain one of the most marvellous fallacies ever imposed upon the human mind. It is so adroitly constructed, that it will be necessary for you to pay the closest attention, while I endeavor to detect and lay it open. The object of it is to introduce three persons into the idea of one God, without shocking the reason, or confounding the first principles of arithmetic.

It is necessary to premise, that all things in the universe may be divided into two classes or categories, *persons* and

things. A person is distinguished from a thing by the attributes that a person is capable of being addressed, and incapable of being divided. A person is *an intelligence, a consciousness, an indivisible unit.* Division destroys the very idea of personality.

A thing is distinguished from a person by the *opposite* attributes, that it is incapable of being addressed, and capable of being divided.

Keeping these principles in view, we proceed to examine the three questions. The first is, "What is God?" And the answer is a very proper one. "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The next question is equally sensible, and equally well answered. "Are there more Gods than one? There is but one only living and true God." In these two questions with their answers, two great truths are clearly stated and acknowledged. First, that there is but one God; and, secondly, that that one God is *a person*, for he is said to be unchangeable in *his* being. The pronoun *his*, clearly represents the whole Deity as not only one God, but *a person*, and *one person*.

The fallacy alluded to is contained in the next question—"How many persons are there in the Godhead?" The fallacy consists in the change of terms from "*God*" into "*Godhead*." By this substitution, *a person* is adroitly, as far as expression goes, transformed into *a thing*, and thus the possibility of *division* is introduced. Reject the substitution, and restore the word *God*, with which the discussion commenced, and the question becomes—"How many persons are there in God?" And recollecting that God was defined to be a person by the use of the pronoun *his*, the question instantly becomes, if our logic be correct, absurd—How many persons are there in God?—who is himself a person, and a person in its own nature indivisible; it cannot be divided even in thought.

But by an ingenious substitution of terms, by changing *God* into *Godhead*, a person, in thought or imagination, is changed into a thing, and the way is prepared to introduce division into the divine nature, without a shock to that reason which the Almighty has placed as a sentinel at the entrance of the human mind, to determine what is true and what is false, what is to be admitted and what is to be kept out. The triumph of this stupendous sophism is accomplished over the understanding; the illusion is completed in open day by this legerdemain of words, when the answer is given—"There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

This triune conception of God being introduced into the thought at an early age, makes the idea of the Deity one of the most perplexed and confused that enters the human mind. No better definition of God can be given than the answer to the first question we quoted—"What is God? God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." As long as we keep to this definition, our conception of God is clear, distinct, and unembarrassed. He is one spirit, one mind, one intelligence, one consciousness, one will, one being, who fills immensity and inhabits eternity. He is the being who is revealed to us in the scriptures as "the only living and true God," and is so worshipped throughout the whole history of divine revelation.

But the moment you introduce three persons into his essence, all becomes to us darkness and confusion, inconsistency and contradiction. The functions of Deity must be divided in order to give each one of the persons something to do. And then these persons must sustain certain relations to each other. But how can this be, if, after all, God is a spirit, that is, *one* spirit, and there is and can be but one God?

Accordingly, this division of the Deity into persons, has

given rise to the most wonderful historical mythology that has ever been invented by the human mind. In the scriptures we are told that, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"—"He spake and it was done ; he commanded and it stood fast." But the upholders of the doctrine of the Trinity tell us, that the first person of the Trinity created the world through the agency of the second ; the Father created the world through the instrumentality of the Son.

The persons of the Trinity were so distinct, according to this theory, that they held *conferences* together, and made covenants with each other in the ages of eternity, long before the creation of the world. For although one of the persons is Son to the other, he is as ancient as his Father. It was foreseen before the creation of man, that he would fall by sinning against God ; yet one of these persons, though sinned against just as much as the others, undertakes to make an atonement to one of the others, leaving the third unatoned and unreconciled.

In order to fulfil this covenant, in process of time, the second person of the Trinity descends to the earth, and becomes incarnate in the body of an unborn infant, and by an ineffable combination with the soul of this infant, becomes one person with it.

By this combination a being is constituted more wonderful and anomalous than even the Trinity itself, a being at the same time divine and human, God and man ; knows all things, and yet confesses ignorance ; is almighty, and yet can do nothing of himself ; prays, and yet possesses all things ; is incapable of suffering, and yet, as death approaches, falls down on the ground in an agony ; and when the moment comes for the second person of the Trinity to make atonement to the first, the human part confesses the absence of the divine, by exclaiming—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !"

That I may not be accused of exaggeration or mis-

statement, I shall here quote entire the second of the articles which constitute a formal declaration of the theology of the Episcopal Church of the United States.

“The Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us; and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.”

Do not such statements as this introduce confusion, inconsistency, and contradiction into the theology of the New Testament?

But the mind, being thus impressed with the doctrine of the Trinity as a fact, is prepared to view the scriptures forever afterwards through the medium of this hypothesis, to find proofs of it when they do not exist, and to overlook the plain and palpable evidence that everywhere abounds, of the personal, numerical, and absolute unity of God.

I proceed to notice a few instances of this. The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians closes with the benediction—“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” This is universally regarded as one of the strongest proof-texts of the Trinity. Innumerable eyes have read in it a formal statement that the Deity subsists in three persons, and many have declared that if this passage could be explained in consistency with the numerical and personal unity of the Divine Being, they would cease to be believers in a triune God. And yet that impression is an illusion, produced by a fore-gone conclusion, that the doctrine is true.

This is, in fact, one of the strongest proof-texts of the personal unity of God, and a most conclusive refutation of the Trinity. Look at it carefully, and you will perceive that what at first appears to be a separate person of this Trinity is God, the *whole* Deity, the second clause being, "and the love of God." God is not the distinctive name of the first person of the Trinity, but "the Father." Had the expression been, "and the love of the Father," it might have been more plausibly alleged as an argument for the Trinity; but being "and the love of God," and the word God comprehending and exhausting the whole divine essence, and being connected with the Lord Jesus Christ by the particle *and*, Jesus Christ is not only not comprehended in the divine essence, but absolutely excluded from it. So that this formula, which has been considered the strongest argument for the doctrine of the Trinity, is found, when analyzed, to be one of the strongest arguments against it.

The case is the same with the form of salutation, which Paul uses at the commencement of his epistles—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Most readers of the Bible, who read it with the bias of the Trinitarian hypothesis, imagine that they have here a salutation from two out of three of the persons of the Trinity. They draw this conclusion from the form of expression, and from the presupposed fact. "God the Father," they imagine, is the peculiar designation of the first person of the Trinity, and "the Lord Jesus Christ" the designation of the second; and thus, they suppose, blessings are invoked from each.

But let a person whose attention has been called to the subject, go over Paul's Epistles and examine the structure of each of them in relation to this matter, and he will find that the form of expression "from God *the* Father," occurs in but three of them, while in the other ten

the form of the salutation is, "Grace unto you, and peace, from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now God *our* Father is an appellation, not of a person of a Trinity, but of the whole Deity, without any distinction of persons. This is the appellation by which we are directed to address God in our prayer, in that formula of devotion which has been left to us by our Saviour. It commences, "Our Father, which art in heaven." We cannot suppose that our Saviour, who could not have been unacquainted with the facts, would have taught us to address but one person of a Trinity, if there really were three, each and all equally possessing all divine attributes, and equally demanding worship from man.

But the Apostle Paul uses the phrases "God *our* Father" and "God *the* Father," as equivalent to and interchangeable with each other. For in ten instances he writes—"Grace unto you, and peace, from God *our* Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" and, in three instances—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God *the* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." If "God *our* Father" and "God *the* Father" are synonymous, "God *the* Father" includes the whole Deity, and the acceptance of the term which makes it the designation of a person of a Trinity, is a total misapprehension, as is likewise its correspondent phrase, "God the Son." The very phrase then, "Grace, mercy and peace, from God *the* Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ," not only does not include Christ within the Deity, but expressly shuts him out of it.

Is it asked—"If Christ be not God, why is he associated with God in this form of salutation? It may be answered that Paul had never known Jesus in the flesh, but only as a disembodied, glorified spirit. His acquaintance with him commenced on the way to Damascus, not as God, but as Jesus, whom God had caused and enabled to appear to him, with a manifestation of miraculous power.

When Paul inquired who he was, he answered not, I am God, but "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The power by which all this was done, did not inhere in Jesus, for Paul expressly says, in relating this transaction, that the explanatory message he received from Ananias was this:—"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and learn the voice of his mouth."

But though not God, the delegated agency of Jesus was manifest in the first planting of his church. And hence the form of salutation adopted by Paul to the churches—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ."

The conceptions of the primitive church of the position occupied by Jesus, and the relations sustained by him after his exaltation to heaven, are clearly exhibited in the Book of Revelation. The doctrinal aspects of this book are usually thought to be Trinitarian, but nothing can be farther from the fact. The first verse, the title of the book, settles this question—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." This is a denial in terms of any participation of Jesus in the Deity.

But the mind, preoccupied by the hypothesis of the Trinity, reads such passages a thousand times over without perceiving how plainly they teach the personal unity of God.

I now come to my third proposition, which is that *the theology we oppose undermines religion*, as we cannot but feel persuaded, *by attributing to God such acts of moral government as render it impossible for man to regard God as either just or benevolent*. Piety is founded on a conviction of the divine perfections. We are commanded to love God with all our hearts. But this command supposes that God is *worthy* of our love. We are commanded to exercise *repentance* towards God. But that repentance

supposes that God has been just in his dealings towards us. We *cannot* repent of that for which we are sure we were not to blame.

Sin is the transgression of a just and equitable law ; a failure to comply with requisitions proportioned to our powers of performance. Repentance is regret for having chosen evil, when good was equally in our power. It arises from the conviction that we are weighed in an even balance, and that every human being has a fair protection.

But the system which we oppose expressly declares, that the first pair of our race only were created "with freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God." This is the very power, which, according to those ideas of justice, that God has implanted within us, is necessary to our just responsibility. But their posterity, it would seem, have no such freedom. For the same system goes on to say—"Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost *all* ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." Nothing can be more certain in the whole compass of thought, than that the loss of freedom involves an exemption from just responsibility to the same extent. Now nothing can be conceived of as more unjust than to take away the freedom and continue the responsibility. But this is the very thing which God is represented as having done to mankind. Not only so, they suffer a double punishment, without having committed any offence. They suffer for Adam's sin, which they did not commit, and then suffer for their own sins, which, through his fault, they cannot avoid committing. Such a government as this is so wholly inconsistent with our natural sentiments of justice and equity, that it fixes the character of the being to whom it is attributed, in palpable, undeniable injustice. Whatever men may say in their creeds, or elaborate in their doxologies, the government of God must appear a

stupendous tyranny. The being who exercises it cannot be regarded with any other sentiments than dread and abhorrence.

Most especially will this be the case, when it is, moreover, considered that our *consciousness* is not adjusted to the real state of things. No such deterioration has been notified to our consciousness, that we "have lost all ability of will to any thing that is spiritually good." Our consciences hold us responsible for every thing we do that is wrong, and make us unhappy by their reproaches, just as if we were in the condition in which Adam was created, with the power to will and to do that which is right. Our consciousness does not correspond to our actual condition, as represented by this doctrine, and therein consists an enormous injustice.

Our consciousness is to us the revelation of God of the real state of things as to our moral constitution. We are compelled to believe that to be fact which that consciousness assures us is true. If our moral nature has suffered a paralysis, then we ought to bear about with us the certain knowledge that we are impotent in this respect, and no longer to be made unhappy by doing wrong, when we are incapable of doing any thing else.

The mode in which a part of mankind are said to be rescued from this condition, is as inconsistent with justice as the way in which they all got into it. It is by *arbitrary election*. Those who are to obtain salvation, are chosen "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions, moving God to the choice."

Such positive acts and arrangements as these, fix and determine our views of the divine character. They are irreconcilable with our natural and spontaneous convictions of justice, and render it a moral impossibility for us sincerely to ascribe moral perfection to God. All sincere worship is at an end. And if such views are fastened on

the Bible, the Bible itself will lose the confidence and respect of the world, and the flood-gates will be opened to universal skepticism and unbelief. It is because we believe that the Bible does not contain these doctrines that it still retains our confidence, our veneration and allegiance. We believe that it is in harmony with nature, with reason, and with the natural conscience of men, and therefore it is that we make strenuous efforts to disabuse the world of the impressions which are gone abroad concerning it.

We believe that it teaches the numerical and personal UNITY of God, that he is *one* mind, *one* intelligence, *one* will—"the blessed and only potentate, who alone hath immortality, whom no man hath seen or can see." We believe in his moral perfections, in short, in his paternal character, that he is not only the Creator, but the Father of his rational offspring. We believe that "God is love," and, therefore, that he is not only just, but compassionate and merciful. We believe that his character is, in the largest sense, paternal. It is the part of a Father to provide for the highest welfare of his children. The highest welfare of man is his spiritual welfare. In this respect, we believe that God has cared impartially for the spiritual welfare of every rational and immortal soul. We believe that He has not left himself without witness to any individual or nation of the human species, and that his universal revelation is the most important revelation that he has made.

We believe that the introduction to the Gospel of John, is a true representation of the various revelations which God has made of himself. The following we regard to be its substantial import :—The Word that he has spoken, or the revelation that he has made, was, first, in the work of Creation, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy," when he "made every thing that was made, and without him was nothing

made that was made." In the second place, in the soul of man, its high faculties, and "in that inspiration which giveth every man understanding," and "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This universal light is a universal revelation, and is the most important revelation of all. It is written on the mind and heart of every human being. It cometh with him into the world, lighteth his path through his whole pilgrimage, and shineth even into that world which is beyond the grave. It places every human being in a state of trial and under a religious discipline, and puts it in the power of all by "fearing God and working righteousness to be accepted with him."

He revealed himself more especially to the Jewish nation through Moses and the prophets; but with that light there came a proportionally greater responsibility. The scriptures of the Old Testament embody a knowledge of divine things, for which we search the records of heathen antiquity in vain. The saints of the old dispensation, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Isaiah, arrived at a measure of knowledge, refinement, and sanctity, which left the good men of pagan lands far behind.

But in Jesus Christ this divine light, which had but dimly glimmered before, burst forth in full orbéd splendour. In him the Word became incarnate. "In him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The dim twilight which had reigned before, brightened, when the Sun of Righteousness arose, into perfect day. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So far as the knowledge of divine things is concerned, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than the sages of the Mosaic dispensation. Passing over then as unessential, all dogmatism concerning the *person* of Christ, we cling to the great fact that in him *the Word became incarnate*; in him divine revelation became full and complete, "and of his fulness have we all received,

and grace for grace." It was that very fulness which constituted the Christian era to be the great epoch of the ages. To it the ages before looked forward, to it the ages since have looked back, as the turning point of human destiny. It *was* so, in respect to the fact, that in his gospel the essential truths of religion were disengaged from the national and ritual relations in which they before existed, and by a new and simpler ritual are made accessible to all mankind ;—in the fact, that in the words which were spoken by Christ, we have the "spirit and life" of a universal religion, addressing itself to the universal soul of man, to be confined by no boundaries of time or space, to live and reign forever.

But, above all, do we think that the power of the gospel resides in the simple historic fact of *the resurrection of Jesus*, which is the keystone of the arch of Christian faith. By this fact, in oriental phraseology, he was raised "to the right hand of God," that is, was clothed with the authority of God, the divine sanction is placed upon all that he had taught in the name of God.

The gospel, then, from the beginning, was armed with a double power, that of *moral conviction*, arising from its identity with the universal reason, and that of *supernatural attestation*. It anticipates and supersedes all philosophy, and restrains the wildness of human speculation. It carries with it the divine signature, and seals the truth itself with the authority of God. It is, therefore, indestructible and eternal. It must spread and grow, till it becomes the religion of the world.

By the resurrection of Jesus, our natural expectations of immortality are confirmed, the dim and distant horizon, which divides time from eternity, is lifted up and dissolved, and "life and immortality" are brought near and made a vitalizing, present reality. The anticipation of retribution, which is inseparable from the moral nature of man ; which travels with him in all his wanderings ;

abides with him in the loneliness of the wilderness ; pervades his thought in the silence of midnight, and inhabits his consciousness in the darkness of a dungeon, becomes an all-controlling fact. But the gospel, as we understand it, does not clothe this thought with the partial and appalling associations of crime, conviction, and punishment, which make up the whole idea of human tribunals—this is God's strange work—but, likewise, and rather, of approbation, of welcome, of glory, and of reward. The wicked must suffer the natural consequences of a sinful life, but at the great day when heaven and earth shall pass away, "the book of life" is to be opened—and no right action ; no benevolent deed ; no cup of cold water ministered to parched and fainting lips ; no soothing word or compassionate emotion, which may be recorded of one of the humblest or most unworthy of God's children, shall lose its reward.

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A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN BALTIMORE,

On Sunday, September 18, 1859,


AFTER THE DEATH OF

REV. GEORGE W. BURNAP, D. D.,

LATE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH.

50675
BY EZRA S. GANNETT.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
117 WASHINGTON STREET.
1859.



University Press, Cambridge :
Printed by Welch, Bigelow, and Company.

AT a meeting of the Trustees of the First Independent Church of Baltimore, held on Monday, the 19th of September, 1859, it was

Resolved, That the thanks of the Trustees be presented to the Rev. E. S. GANNETT, D. D., for his excellent sermon delivered yesterday, on the occasion of the death of the Rev. GEORGE W. BURNAP, D. D., late pastor of said Church, and that a copy thereof for publication be respectfully requested.

DEAR SIR : — Enclosed is a copy of a Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the First Independent Church of Baltimore, adopted this day. Indulging the hope that you may find it convenient to comply with their request,

I remain,

With great respect,

Your friend,

WM. E. MAYHEW, *Chairman.*

BALTIMORE, September 19, 1859.

S E R M O N .

"THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY : BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD."—Job i. 19.

THE old Hebrew piety, from which the Book of Job, by whomever written, derived its tone and complexion, was fond of ascribing all effects directly to God. Having no knowledge of a spiritual Redeemer or a future existence for man, it expended its strength on a practical interpretation of the ineffable name of "Jehovah," — the Self-existent and Supreme, the Author and Upholder of all things. Providence seemed to the devout Jew an immediate expression of the Divine will. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" was a question which, in his judgment, contained its own answer. His incurious reliance on the elementary truth of a religious life enabled him to apprehend the final result of scientific inquiry; which, leading us back through the problems of experience and the doubts of the reason to the simple trust of childhood, authenticates faith in God as at once the first and the last conclusion of the human mind. The Hebrew piety, however, in its treatment of the questions which Providence placed before it, being thrown on its belief of the Divine sovereignty as the solution of life's experience, could not satisfy the demands of inquisitive thought or anxious affection. "The Lord

God omnipotent reigneth, let the earth rejoice," may have silenced complaint, but those were not words by which the anguish of bereavement could be soothed. That submission might triumph over disappointment, it was needful to inform man in regard to the Divine character and to human destiny. There is an undertone of calm despair, to me very mournful, in the explanation which the king of Israel gave of his conduct, when, after the death of his child, he dried his tears and said, as one who saw nothing beyond the inevitable decree which consigns us all to the grave, "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again?" Christ came into the world, and taught man to see a Father's love in the discipline which wrings the heart, and a beneficent ordination in the event which removes one from earth to a better life. Not with a timid ignorance or reluctant consent, but with a soul uplifted into a participation of the Divine purposes, may the Christian exclaim, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Those elements of confidence and hope which the ancient piety lacked are given through Christ. It is not a sovereign will only, but a fatherly goodness also, which we recognize alike in the joys and the sorrows of life. It is not in the beginning alone, but in the close likewise of a mortal career, that we see the great law of existence accomplishing its design. Man lives through love; through love he dies; and death becomes at once an explanation and an expansion of life. "To live is Christ;" for, receiving through him the spirit of adoption, we are able with him to say, in the darkest hour, "Father, not my will, but thine be done:" "to die is gain;" since, having a consciousness of spiritual relations quickened by him, as well as a positive faith in immortality justified by his in-

struction, we know — that is the Apostle's word — we “know” that a release from the body must introduce us to a closer acquaintance with Divine realities. At the grave in which we leave the dearest form our eyes ever looked on, we can say, with a depth of gratitude unknown to them of old, unknown to ourselves before, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord.”

“The Lord gave,” — we are grateful for that; grateful for the life he gave to our friend, grateful for the friend he gave to us. What should we be thankful to God for, if not for a human life? What is there better, what worth more? Consider what it includes of faculty, capacity, and opportunity, of personal endowment and social privilege and various blessing. The wonderful organism which the mysterious principle of vitality animates; the more wonderful constitution of intellectual and moral powers of which that organism is both the prison and the instrument; the multiform dependence by which the human being is bound to his fellow-creatures and to the material universe, to receive and reciprocate benefit at every moment of his existence; the exposure to trial that strengthens, the enjoyment of experience that enriches; the delight of growth, the livelier pleasure of acquisition, and the still higher satisfaction of useful service and social influence; — all this enters into the life of man, even of the least favored. But to how many does that word import yet more; as it suggests to them a Divine care in which they are enfolded, a parental discipline by which they are educated, a consciousness that rises from the first faint perception of self to a communion with the Infinite Source of truth and good, an ability that

has no limit, a duration that has no end. To the Christian what does not this word "life" disclose, even as a key which, in the hand of him who knows how to use it, unlocks apartments reaching far beyond his eye, but filled each and all with untold treasure,—what riches of grace which God has bestowed in Christ! "I have come," said Jesus, "that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." "Life," a word easily dropped from the tongue, but oh! what depths and heights of meaning has it for the Christian believer, what solemn, tender, majestic, delightful revelations for him whose experience becomes its interpreter, through his obedience to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"! When the babe enters the world in which it may become a possessor of all these contents of that little word, life, we are thankful. Shall we not entertain a yet deeper sense of His goodness who bestows the gift, when one who has realized its worth, and been to our eyes in his daily life an exposition of the Saviour's promise, has passed beyond the possibility of ever contradicting that Divine assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also"?

The Lord gave. He gave us the friend in whom we found so much to love and admire. Among the means of satisfaction external to ourselves, what is there more worthy of grateful mention than a friend, whose example furnishes encouragement to every good purpose we may form, and whose society yields us refreshment under the toil or perplexity with which we are burdened? God has scattered blessings around us in profusion, but the pleasantest and the dearest of all, after his own love, is the intercourse we may hold with them who strengthen and cheer us even when their lips or their characters rebuke our scanty good-

ness. Nature is instructive and beautiful; but there is more beauty in living excellence than in the fairest scene which the Creator has made out of material elements, and more instruction in Christian integrity than in all the lessons of the forest or the field, the ocean or the sky. Enjoyment may be found in silent hours, when we sit in the companionship of our own thoughts, and weave the meditations that constitute the fabric out of which good resolutions and virtuous actions are afterwards made; but there is a keener relish to our enjoyment, when in the free interchange of thought we add another's wisdom to our own, and forget our own weakness in leaning on his strength. Books are agreeable teachers and precious comforters; yet better than all books, but one, is the testimony of an actual life to the conclusions which lie at the basis of a sound or happy experience. Chief among the sources of satisfaction or benefit for the soul, too great for comparison with any other, is the privilege of communion with the Father of spirits; but such communion our feeble nature can bear only in its best states. We need fellowship with beings of a kindred mould. We long for the sympathy that comes from an experience like our own. Friends are God's gifts to our weak, yet capacious humanity. They help us to bear and do his will. They lift us over the rough places, and climb with us the steep ascents. What should we do without them? When we are happy, how do they brighten our days! When conscience makes us uneasy, what relief do we find in their counsel! When disappointment oppresses our hearts, what fresh energy do we gather from their kind words! When faith needs to be enforced, and hope to be rekindled, how does God use them as his ministers to our souls! *He* gives

us our friends. He implanted in our nature the sympathies that draw us together. His providence supplies the opportunities of mutual acquaintance. He gives us them whom to love is our delight, and by whom to be loved makes us feel that we are not altogether unworthy. He gives them. Blessed be his name!

But he takes them from us. Yes, he — the same who gave — he removes them from our sight. In the way, too, and at the time, which he chooses. Our will and our wish avail little. Our prayers neither defeat nor delay his purpose. He surprises us by the bereavement which we thought, if it ever came, could not come at present. The arm on which we leaned has lost its strength; the eye that regarded us with affection is closed; the voice to which we listened as it poured instruction into our hearts is silent. Sorely do we grieve. Yet let neither complaint nor unbelief be a consequence of our suffering. For just at this moment of our greatest need the Gospel of Christ offers us its Divine consolation; here, where our lot seems hardest, the relief is greatest. What says the Gospel to the mourner? That which nature did not dare to announce, and reason was unable to discover. It speaks of the Father's love and the believer's rest. It discourses of discipline and recompense in words which give equal solace and support. Linger with me for a moment over these great themes.

We suffer, and it is meant that we should suffer. God mixed the bitter cup which we are forced to drink. The Christian faith is as ready to acknowledge this truth, as was the faith of a period long antecedent to the coming of Christ. But mark how the Divine Providence is described by him who has shown us "the Father;" — as watchful over

every incident of our lives, and as addressing the most tender persuasion to our hearts. It is "for our profit" that we are chastened, "that we may be made partakers of his holiness." Marvellous words! I never read them without fresh amazement. What an explanation of human experience! Man led by earthly sorrows into a participation of the highest attribute of the Divine nature! Who will murmur at afflictions which yield such a result? Let the ground resist the ploughshare that lays it open to the warm sunshine, but let not the soul refuse to be softened and enriched by the chastening of the Lord. Follow now him who has gone. Whither? To the mansions which Jesus has secured for them who love him, to the innumerable company of "the spirits of just men made perfect," to the nearer presence of God and the everlasting light of his countenance, to that world for which all that the soul endured here shall have been a preparation, and of which all that is enjoyed shall seem to have been but the gray dawn. To such happiness is the follower of Jesus taken, when he may no longer remain in the flesh. Come, ye departed, and tell us of the joys into which ye have entered. Nay: why shall we call them back? Have we not knowledge enough, and the full assurance of faith, through him who "hath brought life and immortality to light"? Why ask for more? Rather let us show our confidence in the teaching which came from Heaven, as our grief shall adopt the language of gratitude, — "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

He hath taken our friend from our side, but he has not stripped us of all we possessed in him. Let us see what remains, that our grief may be yet more tempered by gratitude.

All that recollection brings before the mind, of past days, is still ours. That has not perished. Nor shall we ever lose it. How much that we once enjoyed has now a sweeter flavor than it had when familiarity blunted perception! The free communication, the reciprocal confidence, the pleasure heightened by participation, the satisfaction of a conquest over difficulty through the assistance of one whom we loved, the nameless offices which affection delights to render and not less to receive, the brief or the long period of domestic happiness or guileless intimacy, — these have left their record in the chambers of memory, ineffaceable by time.

The example of those we have lost remains. For that, too, is laid up among the treasures over which memory watches with a jealous care. They have shown us what force and purity of character may reside in a human soul; have illustrated the beauty and reality of a Christian consecration; have elevated and enlarged our conceptions of the end for which we should live; have taught us not to succumb to temptation nor yield to discouragement; have given that practical refutation of the doubts and fears by which the heart is beset, that is more satisfactory than the most compact argument; have set before us, to be read by daily observation, a commentary on the New Testament, more instructive than volumes of industrious scholarship. And their example of meek yet vigorous piety, of generous and strong self-denial, of triumphant though modest perseverance, remains the legacy which they have left, ignorant themselves of its value, unconscious as they were of the excellence we attributed to them; a bequest made in no written document, but in the facts of a well-remembered history.

Therefore their influence abides with us. That is not taken away, when they leave us. Nay, it gains new power over us by their absence. We acknowledge and cherish it as we were perhaps slow to do in former days. It may have penetrated our characters without our knowing it, and now acts within us to ripen whatever excellence we have, even as the grain confesses the beneficent influence of the sun after it has disappeared from the heavens. Who does not know that we are more ready to be guided by the dead than by the living? Who has not been persuaded or checked by the remembrance of counsel to which he listened with a reluctant attention, but to which death has added a tender as well as sacred authority?

In a still wider sphere of usefulness they yet live on earth who have been received into the heavenly habitations. For that which they did and said and wrote — if they had used the press as a channel of communication with their fellow-men — is still in the world, a part of its intellectual wealth and its moral force. The author lives through generations and ages. Even when the incidents of his personal history are forgotten, the thoughts which he transcribed from his own meditation upon the pages of an imperishable literature instruct and benefit mankind. The Christian preacher addresses an audience whom he never saw, the expositor of holy Scripture unfolds its meaning to children that were unborn when he went to his reward, the advocate of a higher civilization than his own times had reached still leads men on to more just thought, sounder practice, and a happier experience. We say the world is poorer for the death of its teachers; but let us not forget that their removal often makes the world more cognizant and more receptive of their instruction.

The Lord hath taken away the visible presence of our friend ; but not his invisible continuance with us, through what he has been and what he has done ; nor has He destroyed those sympathies of spiritual connection which unite all the children of God in a household that disowns the limits of space and time. Separated to the eye, we are still partakers of the same Divine love. They who are in heaven worship the same Being to whom we pray on earth ; the redeemed above cast their crowns at the feet of him whose praises we celebrate here. Life is one and the same on this side and on that of the line which divides what we call time from the rest of eternity. Have we *lost* those whom we mourn, because the Father has drawn them into the closer protection of his bosom ? Are they taken from us in any other than an earthly sense, because they have dropped the garment of the flesh a little sooner than we ? No, oh no ! Not taken from us, as one is robbed of treasure of which he shall never hear again. Gone before us, — that is more pleasant and more just to say. Not died, but “*departed*,” as the inscription on the Moravian gravestone everywhere tells us. If lost to sight, still present to our faith.

Learn, then, with what interpretation we should receive the words of our text. Observe what large occasion we have for thankfulness in the midst of sorrow. The Lord gave, — how much to our friend in the gift of life, — how much to us in the gift of a friend. The Lord hath taken, — the same sovereign Disposer, the same tender Father in whose goodness we have rejoiced, has taken him whom we so much miss to a higher life. Yet we are not despoiled of all we possessed in him ; for recollection restores the past, the example on which we gazed with fond admiration has

gained a more distinct outline, the influence which he exerted over us is deepened, his usefulness continues and grows, his being is still held with ours in the arms of an infinite grace. With no sad passion nor mournful discontent may we speak of his removal. It is a hard word to utter, "Farewell!" if we use it only as the sign of privation and separation. But if we take it in its primitive meaning, as the heart's prophecy of good for them who leave us, we may repeat it with mingled emotions of gratitude and hope.

"Farewell! Thy life hath left surviving love
A wealth of records and sweet 'feelings given,'
From sorrow's heart the faintness to remove,
By whispers breathing 'less of earth than heaven.'

"Thus rests thy spirit still on those with whom
Thy step the path of earnest duty trod,
Bidding them make an altar of thy tomb,
Where chastened thought may offer praise to God."

With this subdued sensibility to our great loss, may we, my friends, now come together as mourners under a common bereavement. While your hearts were staggering beneath the shock they had received, you could only pray for submission to God's will. But now that you can think as well as feel, may you not lift your eyes to see the streaks of light across the dark cloud under which you are walking? We have obeyed the spirit of our religion, and, I believe, have kept ourselves in sympathy with him who has gone, by finding occasion still to bless the name of the Lord, rather than by surrendering ourselves to sadness; for he maintained, alike in theory and in practice, the efficiency

of religion as a tranquillizing and cheering influence. With him, faith in God meant filial trust ; faith in Christ, calm and patient hope. It may give us a clearer apprehension of that faith in both its relations, to review some of the impressions which his life and character have made on us.

Dr. Burnap's life was divided into two portions, distinctly marked by a change of residence and employment as he passed from one to the other, but intimately related through the influence which the former exerted on the latter. Born in New England, nearly half of his years were spent at the North ; called to this city in 1827, he remained here till his death. His father was the minister of a Congregational society in Merrimac, a small rural town in the State of New Hampshire. Like many of the ministers of that region, he was a man not only of good sense, but of considerable learning, well acquainted with the original languages of the Bible, and thoroughly conversant with its pages. Of a mother's influence the son felt but little, as she died when he was a child. In his boyhood he gave promise of the tastes which prevailed in later years. Intense delight in natural scenery was among his earliest recollections, and a desire for intellectual improvement began to seek gratification as soon as he was old enough to devote any part of his time to study. Through the assistance of relatives he was enabled to prepare himself for college, and had the satisfaction of entering the Freshman class of 1820, at Cambridge. The death of his father the next year, and the narrowness of his pecuniary resources, involved him in anxieties, which he surmounted by a resolute will and an eager love of knowledge. Before his graduation he had decided on his future course. From his school days it had been his pur-

pose to enter the ministry, and when the time for a final determination arrived, "no other pursuit," as he himself has said, "had any charm for him," nor did he "feel that he could be happy in any other." The three years which he spent in the Divinity School gave precision to his religious views, as well as maturity to his character, and established him in the doctrinal conclusions to which he ever afterwards adhered. Although brought up under what might be called comparatively Liberal influences, he had imbibed the prejudice against Unitarianism common where the opinions which have that name were not understood. Always fond, however, of theological inquiry, and from his childhood disinclined to Calvinism, "at which every feeling of his moral nature revolted," his mind was prepared for the effect which a careful and critical study of the Bible would have on one who came to it dissatisfied with the popular belief, but uninstructed in any other. "We began," he says, in a memoir of the earlier part of his life which I have been permitted to read, — written at the request of one whose wish had with him the authority of a command, — "we began at the beginning of Genesis, and scrutinized every passage to the end of Revelation. Passage after passage, which once had seemed to me to teach the Trinity, was explained, till at last the Unity of God came forth from the pages of the Bible like the sun shining in his strength." In the course of the second year of his attendance in the Divinity School he "made out a pretty full and satisfactory system of theology," — "and my opinions," he adds, "have changed very little since." Before completing his theological studies, he was invited to occupy the pulpit in which he was afterwards ordained to the Christian ministry. How justly he weighed

the opportunities and the trials which such an invitation set before him appears from his own words. "It was to me wholly unexpected," he writes, "and the source of no little embarrassment. I was comparatively young, and wholly without experience. My chief knowledge was of books. I had not more than five or six sermons. The idea of going to a strange and distant city, where there was but one church of our faith, and that just struggling for existence, might well make a young man pause. On the other hand, the very magnitude and peril of the enterprise made it attractive to a youthful mind, somewhat tinged with enthusiasm. My theological education and careful attention to criticism and dogmatic learning had fitted me for a place where the peculiar doctrines of Unitarianism would need explanation and defence. Besides, an idle life never had any charm for me. It was my preference, to place myself in a situation in which my powers would find full employment."

"After long and solemn deliberation," he accepted the proposal you had made, and at the close of the academic year left Cambridge for this city, where he preached for the first time in September, 1827. An acquaintance of eight weeks resulted in an invitation on your part, and an assent on his, to a permanent connection. Returning to Boston after a few weeks more of service among you, he made arrangements for the ordination, which, on account of the inconvenience of travelling at that season of the year, was deferred till the spring. On the 23d of April, 1828, an ecclesiastical council assembled in this place, and set him apart, by the simple yet solemn offices which Congregationalism adopts, to the work of the Christian ministry. It is a

circumstance not unworthy of notice, as showing the interest which was felt in your position, and the confidence reposed in the man whom you had chosen as your pastor, that three of the most venerable ministers of New England, — if I mistake not, the three oldest of the Unitarian clergy, — were members of that council.

Here, then, terminates the first part of our friend's life. From the rough, yet pleasant hill-sides and academic groves of New England, he is transferred to a city full of Southern life and commercial activity. He brought hither the tastes and habits which had ripened there. If he displayed in subsequent years the granite firmness of his native State or the scholarly discipline of one who had been trained in the University over which Kirkland presided and in which Norton taught, you know whence he derived those traits. If the clear, logical action of his mind and the persistent integrity of his life secured for him universal respect, you may not be unwilling to ascribe something to the influences beneath which he grew up to his manhood. If independence was held under due restraint by reverence, while yet faith walked with a free step through heavenly places, are we not reminded of the scenes and the society in which he spent his early years?

On his removal to this city Mr. Burnap entered upon his work with a decision, and yet with a quiet industry that were characteristic of his whole life. He regarded this, we have seen, as a place for the vindication of a misunderstood and traduced faith. Perhaps he looked at it too exclusively in this light. But if his judgment erred in this respect, it was an error almost unavoidable. The origin of the society and its relation to the community around it seemed to

impose the necessity of much doctrinal and controversial preaching. The sermon delivered at the ordination of the first minister had brought Unitarianism before the country, and had drawn upon it the severest criticism. He who with so much ability defended the truth while standing in this post, had left an example which it was not strange that his successor should feel himself moved, if not bound, to follow. It certainly cannot surprise us that a young man, entering the ministry under such circumstances, and at a time when controversy had not yet fallen into disrepute, should have given his strength to an "explanation and defence" of the doctrines which he believed to be alone sound, profitable, or Scriptural. Dr. Burnap's mental constitution, moreover, I cannot but think, disposed him to this kind of work. He loved investigation, and could not consent that the judgment should be misled by mysticism or sophistry. He soon, therefore, became one of the prominent defenders of the Unitarian faith, and at the time of his death stood behind no one of its champions.

For more than thirty years he has lived and preached in this place. How diligent was his toil, how careful his preparation for the pulpit, how sincere his devotion to the ministry which he had undertaken, how single-hearted his interest in your welfare, how true his sympathy in your sorrows, how earnest his prosecution of the purposes which he esteemed paramount to all others, you need not that I should say. My words, the expression of a judgment formed on distant observation and incidental though concurrent testimony, must seem to you cold or inadequate. You who have listened to his familiar voice and seen his daily deportment, can bear stronger witness than other

friends, however much they valued him, to his faithful and irreproachable life.

Of the wider relations which he filled it may not be improper for one, who did not enjoy the privilege of immediate intercourse, to speak. Of the estimation in which he was held by this community, of the support which he lent to the various social interests with which he was allowed or solicited to connect himself, and of the influence which he had built up in a city to which he came an unheralded and youthful stranger, you are best informed. Still, it is impossible to have witnessed the spectacle presented at his funeral, or to have passed a day in this place since his death, and not have found evidence of the hold which he had gained on the general respect. No more decisive proof could be given of real and solid worth, than the fact that, while the religious opinions of which he was the zealous advocate placed him in antagonism to the body of the people, and subjected him to a scrutiny eager to detect occasion for censure, not a word is uttered in derogation of his character, but, on the contrary, every voice acknowledges that Baltimore has lost one of its strongest and best men. An intelligent community is seldom wrong in its estimation of those whom it has had sufficient opportunity to observe; and when, after thirty years' residence, it can speak only in terms of high regard of one of its inhabitants, especially if at first it was necessary for him to disarm prejudice and conciliate distrust, we may accept that judgment as conclusive. The frequent demand made on our friend for services which he always cheerfully rendered, the cordial and even intimate acquaintance which he had formed with many who differed from him widely on questions of con-

troversial divinity, and the emphatic testimony borne to his character as a citizen and a scholar by placing him in the Direction of that noble Institute which will cause the name of its founder to be repeated with gratitude through future generations, declare in what appreciation he was held.

Beyond the limits of your city, or of the denomination to which he belonged, he was well and honorably known. His printed works had given him a wide celebrity. We should do him great injustice if we passed them over in silence, for they were the fruits of patient study, and bore the marks of that clear-sightedness of purpose by which he was distinguished. They would deserve notice as proofs of ability and industry; but as illustrations of the personality whence they proceeded, they claim our present attention. They were not written for a temporary effect, nor thrown off under the impulse of a sudden thought. Carefully considered, deliberately prepared, the plan of each matured before it was executed, the argument skilfully arranged, the rhetorical embellishment judiciously introduced, these volumes constitute a permanent and appropriate memorial of their author. We cannot wonder that he regarded them with a sort of parental satisfaction, for they were the progeny of earnest thought and warm interest. His head and his heart had joined in their production, and they bore the lineaments of their origin. They have made his name known on the other side of the continent, across the ocean, in Asiatic cities, and Australian homes; and though his voice is hushed, they will continue to spread the truths which were dearer to him than life.

Dr. Burnap did not confine his labors to the pulpit and the press. A new channel of usefulness was opened a few years

ago, by a somewhat crude judgment of society respecting its own wants. The lecture-room became a place of popular resort, and they who could interest an audience were called to furnish agreeable or instructive entertainment. Your late minister was of course soon invited to take his part in this attempt to make pleasure the handmaid of improvement. He saw at once that, if the attempt should not be successful, there were incidental advantages which might not be slighted. Still he considered these as secondary, while the primary end he chose to make the instruction which the people needed. He never catered to a taste for mere amusement. The lectures which he delivered here and in other places were suited to convey information, awaken moral purpose, or excite religious feeling. The course which he read before the Lowell Institute in Boston was the result of the study and observation of many years.

Although living at a distance from those who agreed with him in his exposition of Christianity, Dr. Burnap was once and again invited to give them the benefit which they could not fail to derive from his well-disciplined and well-stored mind. He embraced such occasions gladly, for they enabled him to strengthen and extend sympathies that were a source of refreshment to his spirit. His visits to the North were seasons of fraternal intercourse in which he delighted. While he gathered fresh courage for his solitary toil, we were instructed by his example of steadfast faith and hopeful energy.

Indeed, the distinction, which seemed to me to mark him more than any other, was a settled and satisfactory faith. In days when we see so much of fluctuation, or of

bold denial coupled with extravagant assertion, and so little of calm statement or sound opinion, it was no slight privilege to behold one whose belief was legitimated by careful inquiry, and was made a resting-place for the mind. With him of whom I speak belief was a deep conviction of the soul, receiving nothing on the ground of human authority, and rejecting nothing because it claimed to be of Divine origin. He accepted Christianity as a revelation from God, while he disowned the false interpretations which men had put on that Christianity. Dr. Burnap was a Unitarian Christian. To no man on earth did the name ever belong more justly than to him. He was a Unitarian in the strictest sense of that word. He was a Christian in the fullest sense of that word. He had no morbid dread of a name which at once indicated and described his faith. He repudiated every form of Trinitarianism as unscriptural; he assailed the errors of a rationalistic theology as anti-scriptural. The former, as he thought, misrepresented, the latter dishonored Christ. He drew his faith from the Bible. This was his citadel and his armory. He studied the Scriptures, he revered them, he loved them. The first book in which he took an interest, after the Primer from which he learned to read, was the Bible. The first money, of any large amount for a boy, which he ever possessed he spent for a Bible and a psalm-book. The most agreeable of the studies which he pursued at Cambridge was Biblical criticism. "I began this study," he says, "with the determination of making myself thoroughly master of it; and it has been one of the chief employments of my life ever since." It was not mere textual criticism which he meant, but that free yet reverent use of the Bible under the laws of a just interpretation, of which he has given us so

admirable an example in his book on "Christianity, its Essence and Evidence," — a book of which he was accustomed to speak as his most elaborate work.

Dr. Burnap was pre-eminently a student. Much as he admired nature, and dearly as he loved his friends, books were the chief source of his enjoyment. To them he went for invigoration, to them for recreation. From early days he had felt the glow of literary enthusiasm, and in later years the greater part of his time was spent in his library. Some of you may have wished he had given more hours to social intercourse, and it would doubtless have been an advantage to him as well as to you, if he had lifted his pastoral service into a nearer equality of regard with his function as an interpreter of Divine truth. But no one could charge him with a neglect of duty at those times when a minister's presence is most needed in the homes of his people, and to him it seemed plain that the work required of him lay rather within his own doors than in passing from house to house. Who may presume to say that he mistook his work? Each man has his own aptitudes. "There are diversities of gifts." It is one of the advantages of Protestantism, that it cannot entertain a uniform style of ministerial service. Its strength lies in a reasonable indulgence of personal taste and private judgment. The greatest efficiency will always be found where there is the least of conventional restraint or professional routine.

We should communicate a very wrong impression respecting the friend who has been taken from us, if we should suggest the thought that his nature was not touched to issues of tender affection and genial sympathy. With all his habits of study, he was eminently a social man.

Under a calm, and as some persons might judge a cold exterior, were hidden warm sensibilities. Few men took greater delight in conversation. Few had a quicker discernment or a more generous appreciation of excellence. As is often the case, a constitutional diffidence threw a disguise over his emotional nature, and the severity of his composure might be misconstrued into a lack of sympathetic feeling. They who knew him best knew how unjust was such an imputation. In his late visit to the North, writes a friend, he desired to see the portrait of a relative whom he had known in his youth. "He sat before it, and gazed upon it many minutes in total silence, his face betraying an emotion which forbade his speaking." Afterwards he rode to one and another spot with which were connected remembrances of them whom he had loved. On their way back to his host's residence "a long pause ensued, and turning round," his friend "saw the tears streaming down his cheeks." It was a sufficient indication of a genial nature, that he was quick to perceive whatever was pleasant, or might be turned to good account, in the conduct or remarks of others. To this ready perception of what was worth remembering he was indebted for the frequent anecdote with which his conversation was enlivened, and for the apt illustration with which he rendered scientific or religious truth intelligible to the common mind. It was from a speech which he chanced to hear on some public occasion — nor may it be improper to add that the speaker was not one of his own sex — that he borrowed the felicitous title of his treatise on the "Rectitude of Human Nature."

As a preacher, Dr. Burnap, more than many of his professional brethren, would be regarded differently by different

audiences,— here admired, there perhaps not heard with pleasure. A certain stateliness of manner, which with some hearers would be impressive, on others would have the effect of an artificial delivery. That natural diffidence to which I have alluded, and which he himself said often “amounted to nervousness,” and was never wholly overcome, may have been the foundation of a style of pulpit address which was not, I apprehend, best suited to reach the hearts of a promiscuous assembly. But they who gave their attention to the discourse found themselves listening to one who had measured his thoughts and weighed his sentences, and knew both what he wished to say and how to say it. Especially were they made to feel the unquestionable sincerity of the preacher, who might, with perfect truth, have introduced every sermon with the words, I “believe, and therefore speak.”

On his personal attributes there is no need that I should enlarge. Of the intellectual vigor and the moral uprightness by which he was distinguished, of his reverential piety and his true-hearted kindness, of the solidity or of the proportions of his character, why should more be said? He had walked before you in open day through a long acquaintance, and you know that he was an able and a good man.

For more than thirty years had he labored in this field, sowing much seed, and permitted to behold some of it springing up and bearing fruit, while yet another portion is germinating in the secrecy of many an intellectual or spiritual consciousness. His ministry was not free from trial. He knew it would not be when he came here. But difficulty did not depress his courage nor disappointment chill his hopes. With trial was mingled success. He felt

that he had not labored in vain, and he was grateful for what he had been able to accomplish. He loved his work, and the thought of leaving it was one which he could never entertain.

Those thirty years covered an important period in the history of religious thought in this country, and abroad. The Unitarian controversy had just passed its height, and questions of yet broader import were beginning to agitate the public mind. The momentous themes which revolve around the idea of a supernatural communication to man came into debate, and were discussed with a freedom that paid little regard to Christian sensibilities, and a pretension as offensive as the dogmatism which it denounced. Opinion grew lax as it grew bold, and men who had been sick of a surfeit of belief were now likely to die of inanition. A reaction by which some were rescued from this fate carried them back towards the old symbols of thought. For the last five years we have been witnessing and enduring the consequences of a dissolution of mere hereditary and prescriptive authority. Of this state of things within our own body, even more than without it, yet by no means seen only among ourselves, Dr. Burnap was closely observant. Having carefully defined, and both Scripturally and logically justified his position, he could not be moved from it by the currents which poured their waters around him. Liberal in feeling, yet conservative in judgment, he stood a sentinel and a champion on what he believed to be the Divinely built wall that encompassed the Christian household; undisturbed alike by the clamor of those who said it swept too large a circle, and by the cries of them who pronounced the enclosure too small; compromising neither

liberty nor faith, but vindicating by his own example the practicability of their union.

In the midst of his labors he was called into his Master's presence. He had just returned to his familiar duties, refreshed by a visit to the scenes of his early life, and cheered by the renewal of an intercourse that could only be occasional. But a day or two before leaving New England, he spoke of the fresh courage with which he should resume his employments. You observed with what satisfaction he again entered this pulpit. Another week had partly gone, and he had begun a discourse in which it was probably his purpose to present to you his views on certain questions to which the public attention had lately been directed. After an evening which no one of those with whom it was spent imagined would be his last, he lay down,—to awake with the dawn of another day, and then to close his eyes forever on the light of this world. You were startled and shocked as the intelligence came to your dwellings or met you at your places of business. The city was moved. The electric messenger reported the fact in distant parts of the country, and men held their breath as when overtaken by some sudden calamity. In the midst of his strength he passed away. To us it seemed that there was more for him to do before the end came. He was wanted here as we thought. His friends needed him, society needed him, the truth needed him, letters and religion needed him. Yet God took him. And who may say that he was taken too soon? No man is needful to the eternal Providence; and though, in our apprehension, a thousand others could better be spared than he who is taken, to the unerring Eye it may appear that the fit time

has come for his departure. Now that our friend has gone from us we can only prostrate our judgments, with our wills, in submission to the supreme Wisdom. Before his death we could transfer to him but a part of the Apostle's brief, yet comprehensive sketch of his own history; now what more apt language shall we find, in which to clothe our decision upon the life just ended? He had "fought a good fight," he had "finished his course," he had "kept the faith:" there was "laid up for him a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge," was waiting to bestow.

By a single bound he conquered the space between the visible and the invisible, across which so many are led with painful and wearisome steps. It was his desire that such might be his privilege.

To him God's angel came,
A messenger of love;
He sank upon the proffered arm,
And rose to life above.

In one of the churches of Philadelphia may be seen a monumental structure, — perhaps the most beautiful with which modern art has soothed the grief of bereaved affection. At the foot of a cross recline three figures, in peaceful slumber. At their side stands the angel of death with gentle countenance, and wings spread for his upward flight, while his outstretched hand is just falling on the shoulder of one of the sleepers. More plainly than in written words it tells of the believer's passage, without fear or alarm, from an earthly to a heavenly life. Was not that symbolism realized in our friend's departure? Sleeping, we might say, with almost literal truth, at the foot of the cross, where his evening

prayer of thanksgiving and trust had been poured out, he awoke at the touch of an unseen hand, which called him for a moment to a consciousness of his mortal state only to lead him thence to the realm of endless day.

And now with the plaint of grief must there not mingle notes of praise? Shall we not bless the Lord for the life which He committed to one who so well understood its value? Must we not be thankful for the faculties with which he was endowed, the opportunities with which he was favored, and the use which he made of those powers and opportunities for the benefit of his fellow-men? Shall we not acknowledge the goodness of God in giving us a friend, by whose instruction we were profited, and in whose society we delighted? Shall we not be grateful for the precious recollections we cherish, for the persuasion of an example but the clearer for its disconnection from passing events, as the foliage is brightest when guarded from the dust of the highway, for an influence which sinks the deeper into our hearts because it is now purely spiritual, and for that still widening circle of usefulness through which he who has infused any measure of just thought or holy sentiment into the world's literature remains its benefactor long after his personal presence is withdrawn? Truly we have much for which to be thankful, they who were nearest to him measuring the extent of their obligation by the pain of their bereavement. It is present loss that shows us past privilege.

With what importunity of solicitation do such a life and such a death address us! That change, so sudden, so great, from contact at every point with the sensible world, to an entrance into the world of spirits, how earnestly does

it speak of the constant preparation which should be made for an hour of which we may have no warning! And what other preparation can be made than is seen in a life well-spent, — in uprightness of character, loyalty of soul, a practical interpretation of the Gospel of God's grace, an exemplification of the righteousness that is through faith! If God in his great mercy will accept sincere endeavor and consecration to a right purpose, for the faultless service which it belongs only to them who have passed "within the veil" to render, shall we not by such consecration and such endeavor press "towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?" They who have gone before us beckon us on. Here they counselled, now they entreat us. The memorial which they have left on earth is an undying testimony in behalf of man's highest interests; the glory into which they have risen shines down, to lure and guide us in the path which they trod.

